An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an vol. 16

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The light of Islam has enlightened and continuing to enlighten every corner in the world and seekers of truth have closely associated to the Holy Quran which carries the Word of Allah (SWT) to humanity. With increasing focus and attention to the Holy Quran, efforts has been done to provide a pure, correct and accurate translation of this divine book. But sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman, to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity. Hence, the need for proper explanation becomes obvious and necessary. The book titled, "An Enlightening Commentary into the Light of the Holy Qur'an" compiled by a group of Muslim scholars, under the direction of Ayatullah Allamah Al-Hajj Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani is a valuable effort which presents a thorough commentary on the Quran in 20 volumes made available to the reader.

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Translator(s):

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Introduction

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"Verily the Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable) (to run societies), and giveth the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificent reward" [1].

“We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad tidings to Muslims"[2].

“When those come to thee who believe **in** ***Our Signs, say: 'Peace be on you: Your Lord hath inscribed for Himself*** **(*****the rule on Mercy; verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended*** **(*****his conduct*****),** ***Lo! He is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful”***[3].

The light of Islam is illuminating hearts of individuals in nearly all parts of the world, in spite of heavy barriers and careful controls and religious interrogation exerted by not only many governments of non-Muslim nations, but also in some Muslim countries, against their believing people, especially during the years after the Islamic Revolution of Iran.

The effective influence of the light of the truth together with the speed in the movement of the Age has brought forth a more vital exchange of thought and religious ideology in connection with the Holy Qur'an.

In regard to this, we refer to what the Messenger of Allah (S) has said about it:

When afflictions surround you like the dark night refer to the Qur'an, because, it is an Intercessor whose intercession is accepted. It reports the evils (*of people*) *which will be confirmed. It leads the person to Heaven who puts it in front of himself* (*follows it*)*; and he who puts it behind himself* (*neglects it*) *will be driven to Hell.*

This very Qur'an is the best guide to the best ways. It is a Book in *which there are useful explanations, statements and gaining* (*of goals*)*. It is the Separator* (*of right and wrong*).[4]

Obviously, those people whose language is not Arabic can refer to the Holy Book in English, because this is an international language and it is possible for all nations with any native language, to read and understand it in English. As far as we know, there are more than 50 different English translations of Qur'an available in Iran alone, and probably others exist in libraries (and homes) throughout the world.

This makes it easy for the lovers of truth to obtain the knowledge of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic ideology, through the medium of English, which formerly was acquired directly by the Arabic and Persian languages.

But, a fact should be mentioned here that not all of the words of Allah are easily understood by ordinary people and need explanatory commentary, i.e. 'Tafsir’.

Alongside this path, there are some problems that those eager to learn the Qur'anic truth should know and be careful of. Hence, we deal here with some of the difficulties we were involved in and recognized when we were preparing this endeavour; the fruit of our humble labour of more than three years, a translation of the commentary of over one section (of the 30 sections) of the Holy Qur'an from different commentary sources.

The work is based upon popular commentaries accepted by Muslim scholars. We consulted other books and present living scholars, learned in the Qur'anic Sciences for our work to produce this commentary in a simple standard of English easily understood by the laymen.

The style of writing here is a mixture of British-English and American-English, understandable for all the readers; even for those acquainted with only one of them. However, excuse us for using interchangeable spellings. If both are used, from time to time, they are acceptable; for example, honour and honor.

Not All English Versions of Quran Are Acceptable

Some Western translators of the Holy Qur'an; not all of them, and some producers of literature on Islam in the English language, are the anti-Muslim elements which are busy in distorting the facts about the faith to create disruption in Islamic ideology.

These hostile minds have attempted to black-list the Holy Prophet (S) and the religion of Islam, through their purposeful and subtle mis-translations, mis-interpretations, mis-representations and distortion of the facts.

The distortion and the misinterpretations are so skilfully decorated in linguistic excellence and delusive logic that the blind lovers of the English language, who are hardly or even totally unaware of the actual Qur'anic factors of their own faith, get caught up in the falsehood tempered with eloquence and they swallow the 'sugar-coated poisonous pills of deceit' allowing themselves to become duly conditioned to serve the purpose of the publications of the hostile camps.

The current standing of Evil has always been against the Truth in the history of man, even before written history, when the sons of Adam came into existence.

When these antagonistic elements have successfully extended their active influence upon our own religion, ideology and social tradition, we are also duty bound to Allah, His Final Word (the Holy Qur'an), the Faith, and to Islam, to do our best to present to every sincere seeker of Truth, a selection of a translation of the verses of the Holy Qur'an of the original Arabic text, and the 'Tafsir' (commentary) of them.

By the way, we believe that it is the essential belief of 'Shi'a' that the present Qur'an, that which is in our hands today, is the Holy Book of Allah, revealed to the holy Prophet Muhammad (S), as arranged and compiled during his lifetime and read out to him and it contains nothing less or more than what was revealed.

And it should be noted that,

"Nay, but it is a Glorious Qur'an, (inscribed) in a tablet preserved."[5]**,**

whose present arrangement is the order in which the various verses were sorted and arranged at the

command of the Holy Prophet (S), himself.

This is the uncorrupted or undisturbed Word of *Allah,* the preservation of which has been guaranteed by *Allah,* Himself:

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly guard it (from corruption)" [6].

Furthermore, the English translations, along with the Arabic text of the verses, in this book, are selected from different translations of English versions of the Holy Qur'an, (whose names are listed at the end of the book under the title of **'References'**) which are from the best available sources in which some better styles and more proper meanings are employed. The translator and editor did their best to preserve this divine message and in conveying the Qur'anic facts in English.

In a few instances this writer, the translator, changed a word of those existing translations to a better one, from the existing material which was employed in this work.

What is a 'Commentary'?

A pure, correct, accurate translation of the Qur'an is necessary, but sometimes it is difficult for the readers to understand all of the apparent and hidden meanings and it is the duty of every Muslim, man or woman to read, understand and contemplate on the Holy Qur'an according to his own capacity:

"...read you, therefore, of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you.." [7].

This reading has to be done not only with the tongue, voice and eyes; a mere recitation, but, also, with the best light that our intellect can supply, and even more, with the truest and purest light which our heart and conscience give us.

However, it is not always possible to fully understand the Holy Book as *Allah* says:

"That is indeed a Qur'an most honourable,"Which none shall touch but those who are purified" [8].

Thus, some additional information is needed. For example, it is sometimes necessary, for understanding the text, to refer to the particular occasion for the revelation of a particular verse; or to know the philological changes of a word used at the time of revelation or before it and the meaning that it has in Arabic, today.

Or the alphabetical symbols which evidently and undoubtedly are secrets, and especially the ambiguous /mutashabihat/; the knowledge of which has been announced to be with the /rasixuna fil 'ilm/; those deeply established in knowledge.

They are some things that only 'the particular ones, the sinless ones', besides the Prophet (S), himself,

viz, Ahlul-Bait, knew with all the Qur'anic facts and talked about them in their traditions and narrations (as He says:

"And whom We had taught knowledge from Our own Presence"[9].

For instance, the Apostle, himself, answered the questions which used to be asked by people as to the meaning of certain words in the verses revealed, or details of certain historical or spiritual matters on which they sought more enlightenment. These answers and explanations or in other words, the commentaries were gathered by some Companions /ashab/ and were afterward written down which are called 'Hadith' or 'traditions'.

Of course, the holy Prophet (S) had openly declared in Hadith-uth- Thaqalayn that the Qur'an is with the Ahlul-Bait, and to avoid going astray, the Muslims should be attached to these two. Later, the Ahlul-Bait's explanations and narrations, were added to them and together with the effect of expert religious scholars, in the past and present, established 'Exegesis' (explanation of Qur'an) which became a science in itself and was called 'Tafsir', commentary.

'Commentary' shows how every verse, or group of verses, were revealed to the holy Prophet (S) on a particular occasion, but which also has a general meaning. The particular occasion and the particular people concerned have passed away, but the general meaning and its application remain true for all time.

This is also one of the miracles of the Qur'an that with the help of 'commentary' it is always open and it is always new for those new generations to come.

The Current Commentary

As was mentioned earlier, the light of Islam is enlightening every corner in the world and seekers of truth, having referred to the translations of the Holy Qur'an, find that they need 'Tafsir', (commentary).

Some of them, Shi'a believers in particular have been led to this Center; Imam Ali (a) Library, requesting a clear, concise English Tafsir; 'a commentary of the Holy Qur'an'.

From the beginning of Islam until today (although many times the Holy Qur'an has been translated into English and a few of them are published with brief, detailed commentary, as footnotes, there has rarely been, as far as we know, a fairly complete commentary in English sufficient for them to find their answers. So the decision was made to supply this commentary.

Ayatullah Mujahed Al-Hajj, Allamah Sayyid Kamal Faqhih Imani, the founder and responsible party of this Islamic Scientific Research Center, approached us and reported the situation to scholars and appropriate research societies.

Then 12 people, who had varying nationalities and educational backgrounds, especially from the point of the English language and Islamic Theology, gathered. In their first gathering, which was held on 28th Safar, 1412 (1370 H. / 1991), they concluded that the commentary of the whole Qur'an which they intended to supply in English, would take many years to produce.

In order to quench the thirst of the lovers of Truth who had demanded it again and again, they decided to supply the commentary of the last section of the Qur'an, as a sample, and after its publication and receiving constructive comments by the readers and with a better skillfulness of the ones involved, the translation of the commentary would begin from the beginning of the Holy Qur'an.

Therefore, they thought it would be better that the sample, entitled **'An Enlightening Commentary Into the Light of the Holy Qur'an',** begin with Surah Insan, the end of the 29th Section, because the Qur'an was revealed for the improvement of Man and this Surah is about Man and his creation from a lowly life-germ which can develop unto the highest point where no other creature can ascend.

But, after several weeks the number of us dwindled to a handful and after some months, until the present, we remain two people; the translator and the editor. During this period of more than three years, a few people have tried their hands at this task to have a share in the translation, but, for different reasons, they were not successful.

However, we are completely grateful for their efforts and extend our thanks for their attempts, as well as to those who had any involvement in this work.

Attributes Needed for Working on This Kind of Commentary

This endeavour needed not only the knowledge and skillfulness in the English language, but also the knowledge of Arabic, and Islamic science and culture, because Tafsir is an attempt to analyze and explain the meaning of verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Moreover, Allah, Himself, says:

"We have sent down to thee the book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy, and Glad Tidings to Muslims"[10].

Then, it needs that those involved know a little bit about almost all sciences and knowledge that human beings are concerned with when working with the commentary. Also, the phonetic sound systems of the two languages, English and Arabic, are different. Therefore, when an Arabic word from the Qur'an is mentioned in the English text, it is shown with the phonetic alphabet and in its special phonetical sign, i.e.: / /, to avoid using 'Arabic script' in the book, as far as possible.

A transliteration table of the Arabic letters and sounds and the corresponding phonetic signs, applied in this book, is given at the beginning of the book.

The Problems in Translating

We tried to avoid mixing up our own personal theories and conclusions with the interpretation of the text itself. With the help of Allah, we did our best; at times asking for guidance from some learned religious men (Ruhaniyan), and used all the knowledge and experience we possessed in the service of the Holy Qur'an for its commentary, hoping that *Allah* accepts it.

The nature of this sort of endeavour is so that, in the course of translation, some difficulties arise from various causes.

For instance, cultures in the Arabic language and English language are different so that some of the words like /amrun bayn al amrayn/ in the case of fatalism and freewill are nearly impossible to translate into English, because of the difference in the concept in English literature; or the meaning of a word like 'prostration', in English, is rather different with what /sajdah/ exactly means in Arabic.

In such cases, we selected the meaning of the words from among what the earlier commentators and phililogists used and where they were not unanimous, we also used the ideas of new writers, who had reasonable advantages in their interpretations, when the senses adopted with the commentary sources that we were taking and translating materials from. Explanations, of course are always helpful which we took benefit from, too.

It is noteworthy that there are some circumstances in the text, of the commentary, in which a verse or verses of Qur'an from other Suras rather than the Surah under discussion are mentioned as evidence or, thereby, for strengthening the idea.

The text of these verses and also the traditions and narrations from the holy Prophet or Ahlul-Bait (a) is printed in bolder type than the running commentary in order to distinguish, at a glance, the substance from the shadow. Also, the mentioned verses are generally taken from A. Yusuf Ali's translation.

It Was Only By His Merciful Will!

Translators Note

Both the editor and the translator have interesting factual stories to tell of how the way of this endeavour was paved by Providence and how they were divinely led to be absorbed into this task, Alhamdulillah. A few words given here in this regard are not to be misunderstood as a display of vanity for any peculiar distinction; for there is none.

It is purely to attract the attention of the readers to a living instance of the Providential implementation of the divine plan and how man drifts to his assignment and how matters are automatically manipulated, though, they seem yet only to be circumstantial.

***"He said: Our Lord is He Who gave to each* (*created*) *thing its form and nature and further gave* (*it*) *guidance"*[11].

For example, once, on a night, the writer of these lines, the translator, had seen in a dream that the Holy Qur'an, was placed, honourably, on a high position, wide open, high above a very great crowd of people amongst whom he was standing, watching. The full name of his was clearly written in the midst of the writings on the right page of it with magnificent bold letters.

The dream was obviously a good one, but it did not mean vividly to him at that time.

It was four years before he found out, in the course of translating the commentary of verses 11-16 from Surah 'Abasa No. 80, both the meaning of that dream and the cause of later changes in his career of twenty years, as a manager of a profitable Foreign Language Center, thanks to Allah.

It is always true what the Qur'an says:

"You will not unless Allah wills, surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise"[12].

By His graceful arrangement this writer was separated from his almost material gains, of this fleeting world, to be set toward the assured, perfect, pure, spiritual rewards of the next, everlasting world from Him, Allah willing, when he began translating the commentary of the Qur'an and entered this great Divine Ocean of light, he found out that from earlier times such a success had been appointed and bestowed to him by Allah.

Therefore, all changes and graceful arrangements directly are from Him and it was His helpful Will that planned His graceful design and showered the ability and insight upon us to lead us to the present point. We are eagerly in hopes that He will help us and guide us in all cases to complete the task successfully so that He accepts it from us.

Editor's Note

In my case, it is a fact that only by the grace of Allah have I come to be at the helm working, side-by-side with the translator, on this commentary of the Holy Qur'an. Editing and checking this translation of **'An Enlightening commentary into the Light of the Holy Quran'** has been a most important and rewarding experience for me.

To be of value in this work several things were necessary; my mother tongue, English, was almost at the top of the list. Then, having the ability to use a computer and printer, which involved me having to learn and use a Farsi program named Zarnegar, produced in Tehran, Iran, I was able to make use of the wonderful array of fonts it contains; necessary to type the Arabic and English languages.

Next, living in Iran, for four years, has made it possible for me to become acquainted with the native

language and customs. However, the greatest asset, of all, is that I am a Shi'a Muslim woman.

It is fifteen (15) years from now, that in America, I became enlightened to the existence of the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as a better way of life. Over this period of time it has put me in touch with the purity of the religion and the logical answers to the religious questions I had as a Catholic.

My father told us (during our childhood) that if we ever wanted to know anything we should go to the source and to always have the correct tools on hand to do the job right.

When I started hearing and seeing, on television, the upheaval of the Islamic Revolution, in Iran, and the speech of a brave and courageous man they called Ayatullah Khomeini, I became very intense on knowing why it was happening and in knowing who this man was who had been exiled and was making his return to his homeland.

"Our Lord! We have heard the call of one calling (us) to faith, 'Believe ye in the Lord,, and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous"[13].

It was something more spectacular than I had ever read about in my high school history books. There was a charge in it that I could not explain, and up until that time, I had never really heard anything about Islam, Prophet Muhammad or Muslims, for that matter.

I bought ***A. Yussuf Ali's English Translation of the Holy Qur'an,*** basing my decision on my father's counsel and I began from page one.

It was talking about the same things I had already learned; Adam and Eve in the Garden, disobeyed God due to the wiles of Satan and then, were expelled to Earth; Moses is given the scripture and leads his people out of Egypt, but they forfeited their covenant for a golden calf; Abraham, Ismail and Issac of the religion true, and there, Mary.

Hail Mary! Chaste, pure, chosen above other women, given glad tidings of a Word from Him; his name will be Christ Jesus, son of Mary, held in honor... [14]

And it went on: Practise charity, take care of the orphans, speak a speech that is just, beware of the deceits of the Unbelievers...I was in awe as I neared the end. No place was any obscenity found –no trace of ugliness which I found in the Bible –nothing but pure scripture; a complete religion, the one and only continuing from the first of Abraham. So, it became crystal clear to me that Islam is the final, refined message from God.

True, just, undeniable, containing what I had always felt and that is this: There is only One God; unique, needing no partner, powerful, and yet merciful and kind. How could God be more than one; Creator of such a vast universe and more?

With this understanding, though, came many tests to my new-found-faith; albeit necessary tests. Did I really believe - did I really submit to His Will - was I really worthy?

I began by only putting on a scarf, covering all of my hair.

"And say to the believing women...that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers..."[15]

Immediately the responses that I encountered proved the rightness of it all. I was chided, spit at, hit and cursed. Well, of course, a great deal of this was due to the propaganda which caused mass hysteria against Iran and not having their facts straight about the religion of Islam, however, it hurt just the same, but I had learned forgiveness and perseverance from my mother.

It was difficult for my family in the beginning; this change I was making, however, we are very close at heart, today, due to my faith and reliance on Allah.

"And out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"[16]

Almost at once the veils over my understanding fell away and I started rejecting a lot of the 'big-business' propaganda that had infiltrated into my life.

"Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error; whosoever rejects Evil and believes in God bath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks..."[17]

The 'Big Sell' eats away at the very fabric of human society to the point that life has only a superficial meaning and high value is put on every inanimate object which man can produce.

"The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith, and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for God bestows His abundance on whom He will "[18].

I had developed an intense desire to go to Iran--the country of martyrs; having an air so thick with emotions, direction and goal, at that time, and having the presence of an undeniable strength caressing it in the hands of an unseen power.

Ten years after I started practicing the tenets of Islam the opportunity presented itself for me to be able to fulfil my desire.

"Not equal are those Believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause...God has granted a grade higher to those who strive..."[19]

I wished very much to become involved in some type of work regarding the Holy Qur'an and in due time I was approached to work with a group of people on a commentary of the Holy Qur'an.

"And for those who fear God, He prepares a way out" "And He provides for him from (sources) he never could imagine..."[20]

Those of you who know anything about the rigors of editing know that it is very time-consuming and attention to detail is very necessary.

Spending many hours discussing the meaning of a single word, or phrase, can cause the ordinary soul to become frustrated, but that frustration is ultimately quelled when peace and tranquillity cover the heart at the point where there is that final agreement and gives those involved renewed enthusiasm to continue.

Sometimes you will notice more spacing than usual on a line or within the phonetic brackets (/ /), but this is due to the fact that the Zarnegar program is a Farsi program and it took much time trying to place the little phonetic line over, or the little dot under, the correct letter, because English is written from left to right and Farsi is written from right to left, so, I had a bit of anarchy on my hands for a time.

I leave you, now, in the hopes that you, too, will be provoked to question and seek. (Seek and you will find). Looking back, I feel that Allah does consider me worthy.

"God is the protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them into light"[21].

Wa Salam.

1. 17:9
2. 16:89
3. 6:54
4. Usul al-Kafi, vol 2, p. 599.
5. 85:21, 22
6. 15:9
7. 73:20
8. 56:77, 79
9. 18:65
10. 16:89
11. 20:50
12. 76:30
13. 3:193
14. 3:42-45
15. 24:31
16. 17:24
17. 2:256
18. 2:212
19. 4:95
20. 65:2-3
21. 2:257

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By the way, it should be notified that for the translation of this volume, Tafsir Nemunah has been mainly utilized.

* * * *

يَأَيها النّاس قَدْ جَاءَكُم بُرْهَنٌ مِّن رّبّكُمْ وَ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ نُوراً مّبِيناً

"O mankind! Verily there has come to you a convincing proof (***the Messenger and the Qur'an***) ***from your Lord: for We have sent unto you a light*** (***that is***) ***manifest."***[1]

إِنّا نحْنُ نَزّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَ إِنّا لَهُ لحَفِظونَ

"We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and We will assuredly Guard it (***from corruption***)***."***[2]

وَ مَنْ أَعْرَض عَن ذِكرِى فَإِنّ لَهُ مَعِيشةً ضنكاً وَ نحْشرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ أَعْمَى

"But whosoever turns away from My Message (***the Qur'an***)***, verily for him is a straitened toilsome life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgement".***[3]

وَ نُنزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْءَانِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَ رَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

"And We send down** (**stage by stage**) **of the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy for those who believe ..."[4]

1. 4:174
2. 15:9
3. 20:124
4. 17:82

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A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَطِيعُواْ اللّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ الرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي الأَمْرِ مِنكُ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficient, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you". [1]

(***'Those charged with authority'***

are only the twelve sinless Imams (a) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدركه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سميي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عباده ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?'

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

*He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a.-Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world.'*2

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".3

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم الثقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul-Bait; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kauthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

*"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".*4

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (a) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment".

I asked him (a) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (a) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." 5

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'uni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p.17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma' ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207

Surah al-Zumar, Chapter 39, Verses 1 - 29

(The Groups)
Sections (juz') 23-24
Number of Verses: 75

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter has 75 Verses and is revealed at Mecca. Like other Meccan Chapters, it mainly treats of God Almighty and Resurrection.

The word ***zumar*** indicates "groups" and the title of the Chapter, as mentioned in Verses 71 and 73, alludes to the ingress of the peoples of Hell and Paradise into their assigned dwellings. The Chapter mainly focuses on the Unity of the Creator, Lordship, and worshipping Him particularly sincere worshipping and humble veneration of Him.

The presence of people on the Day of Judgment and their being judged on the basis of the records of their deeds and the testimony of the witnesses and the ingress of sinners and the pious into Hell and Paradise receive further emphasis and detail.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

Recitation of Chapter 39 receives remarkable significance in Islamic traditions and instance of which is the Prophetic tradition saying:

"One who recites Surah al-Zumar shall not lose hope of Divine Mercy and shall be recompensed the rewards of the God fearing."[1]

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"One who recites Surah al-Zumar shall be accorded honor and dignity in this world and the Hereafter even if he lacks in worldly possessions and family support in such manner that others shall stand in awe upon meeting him and his body shall not be burned in Hell."[2]

A comparison of the aforementioned merits with the contents of the Chapter concerning fear of God, setting one's hope on His Mercy, sincerity in worshipping Him, and absolute submission to the Pure Essence of Truth clearly indicates that such rewards shall be reaped by those for whom the recitation of Divinely revealed Verses serve as a prelude to reflection based upon which they have faith and do righteous good deeds.

In other words, the contents of the Chapter find their way into their heart and they turned into their permanent disposition of mind whose reflection may be fully noticed in their life. Such people deserve to reap such great rewards and Divine Boundless Bounties and Favors.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ فَاعْبُدِ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصاً لَهُ الدِّينَ

1. The Revelation of the Book** [**unto you in portions at certain times**] **is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.
2. Indeed We have sent down this** [**Revealed**] **Book unto you in truth; So worship Allah by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah's sake.

The words:

tanzil (***"sending down in portions at certain times"***)

and

inzal (***“sending down in whole at one time”***)

are both mentioned in these two blessed Verses, opening with the Revelation of the Holy Qur’an, the former and the latter allude to the Pure Divine Essence as the Origin of Revelation and the content as well as the final goal of the Holy Qur’an respectively.

The first Verse says that this Book is Revealed by God, the All–Mighty and All–Wise.

Any book is known by its revealer or author. Being apprised of the Divine Origin of Revelation of this Glorious Revealed Book and the fact that the Omniscience of God Almighty, the Omnipotent and the All–Wise, is the Origin of the Revelation of the Book thanks to Whose Omnipotence nothing is impossible and His Boundless Knowledge embraces all things, we come to comprehend the Gloriousness of Its contents.

It will suffice to acquire certitude concerning the veracity of Its contents abounding in Wisdom, Light, and Guidance.

It is worthy of note that such expressions opening Qur’anic Chapters bear witness to the fact that the contents of this Glorious Book is wholly Revealed by God Almighty; in other words, the contents of the Holy Qur’an constitute Divine Word rather than that of the Noble Prophet (S), even though his word is also exalted and full of wisdom.

The second Verse treats of the contents and the goal of the Revelation of the Holy Qur’an saying:

“We have sent down this [***Revealed***] ***Book unto you in truth.”***

The significant point is that there is nothing but Truth in the Divinely Revealed Book; that is why seekers of Truth proceed toward it and those thirsty of finding their way to the valley of Truth are after Its contents.

The goal behind the Revelation of the Holy Qur’an is to provide humanity with pure religion as a consequence of which the Verse closes thus:

“So worship Allah by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah’s sake.”

The word religion may ad hoc designate worshipping God Almighty, since it is preceded by:

“So worship Allah”

which is followed by:

“by doing religious deeds sincerely for Allah’s sake,”

making a reference to the fact that the prerequisite of the verity of worship lies in sincerity of heart and

its purity from polytheism and dissimulation.

Yet, taking into account the wide range of the meaning of the word:

"religion" (***din***)

and its lack of restrictions one may notice that it signifies a wider range of meaning embracing worship, other deeds, as well as beliefs.

In other words, the word:

"religion"

encompasses the corporeal and spiritual dimensions of man. In this vein, sincere servants of God Almighty are supposed to refine all the aspects of life from impurities, reject other entities besides God Almighty from their hearts, souls, words, and deeds, reflect upon Him, love for His sake, speak and act for Him, and take steps for His satisfaction – this is

"religious sincere devotion."

Therefore, there would be no need to restrict the meaning of the Verse to the declaration of faith by uttering "*There is no god but Allah,*" nor is there any firm ground to delimit the meaning to

"worship."

Surah al-Zumar – Verse 3

أَلا لِلَّهِ الدِّينُ الْخَالِصُ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَي إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ فِي مَا هُمْ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَهْدِى مَنْ هُوَ كَاذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ

3. Know that the pure religion is for Allah and those who take gods besides Allah [***said justifyingly***] ***"We solely worship them that they may bring us near to Allah." Indeed Allah will judge between them regarding that wherein they differ. Allah never guides one who is a disbelieving liar.***

The value of religion lies in its purity lest it is metamorphosed by vain desires and superstitious beliefs

(***"the pure religion is for Allah"***).

The opening clause of the blessed Verse may be interpreted in two ways.

Firstly, God Almighty solely accepts the pure religion, total submission to Divine Decree, whereas any polytheism, dissimulation, and confusion of Divine Laws to those besides them are unacceptable.

Secondly, pure religion is solely bestowed upon man by God Almighty, since human thought is imperfect and erroneous.

Taking the exegesis of the preceding Verse into account, it sounds more appropriate to acknowledge the former interpretation since the subject of purity or sincere devotion is

"God's servants,"

as a consequence of which they are supposed to act accordingly.

Another argument substantiating the same is a Prophetic tradition according to which a certain man came unto him saying:

"O Messenger of God (S)! We give out possessions to others in order to gain reputation. Will we be rewarded thereby?"

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"No!"

The man inquired once more that at times they give their possessions for both acting upon Divine Decree and gaining reputation and he wondered whether there would be any reward for the same.

The Prophet (S) replied:

"God does not accept anything unless it is solely done for Him."

Then, he recited the blessed Verse:

"Know that the pure religion is for Allah."3

It is worthy of note that the third Verse substantiates the preceding One.

The former says:

"Worship God out of sincere devotion and sincerity of heart."

The latter says:

"God Almighty solely accepts righteous deeds."

Great emphasis is laid upon

"sincere devotion" (ikhlas)

in Qur'anic Verses and Islamic traditions. The opening word of the Verse, ala is usually employed to

attract attention which also bears testimony to the significance of the subject in question.

The blessed Verse also makes a reference to the falsity of the polytheists' baseless arguments since they turned away from the path of sincere devotion and went astray in error saying that those who acknowledge gods besides Allah as their objects of devotions justifying that they worship them to render them closer to God, God will judge between them regarding that wherein they differ on the Day of Resurrection.

The falsity and corruption of their thoughts and deeds will be knows to everyone on that Day:

(***"Allah and those who take gods besides Allah*** [***said justifyingly***] ***'We solely worship them that they may bring us near to Allah.' Indeed Allah will judge between them regarding that wherein they differ. Truly Allah guides not one who is a disbelieving liar."***

The blessed Verse serves as a serious warning to polytheists that the Day of Resurrection will be the Day on which differences shall be removed and the truth shall be clear. On such a Day, God Almighty will judge between them so that they will be recompensed for their deeds; furthermore, they will be disgraced before everyone on the Day of Resurrection.

Human immediate contact with God Almighty is accorded particular emphasis in the Qur'an– he may speak unto Him, offer Him his devotions, supplications, ask Him for forgiveness, and the acceptance of his repentance.

They are all within His Will and Omnipotence. Chapter 2[4] bears testimony to this fact since God's servants recite it in all their daily prayers thereby they establish immediate contact with their Creator and invoke Him to answer their prayers.

The manner of repentance and asking God for forgiveness and answering prayers as mentioned in the devotions transmitted through many a tradition demonstrate that no intermediary is acknowledged in the Islamic faith and the same indicates the Truth of Divine Unity.

The question of intercession with God's saints or favorites is also based on the Creator's Permission which once more lays emphasis on the dogmatic principle of Divine Unity.

The attachment is supposed to be established since He is closer to us than ourselves, as it is thus said in the Holy Qur'an:

"We closer to him than his jugular vein" (***50:16***)***;***
"Know that Allah comes in between a person and his heart" (***8:24***)***.***

Yet, He is neither far from us, nor are we far from Him; thus there is no need for intercession. He is closer to us than any other one; He is Ubiquitous and our hearts entertain Him.

Therefore worshipping intercessors, be them angels, jinn, and the like, or worshipping stone and wooden idols is baseless and false; furthermore, such worship is considered ingratitude for Divine Blessings, since the One Who bestows Bounties, rather than inanimate objects or needy creatures deserves worship.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question closes with:

"Allah never guides one who is a disbelieving liar."

He neither guides disbelievers to the Straight Path in this world nor will He admit them to Paradise in the Hereafter, since they have turned away from Divine Guidance. God Almighty solely guides those who deserve and are willing to embrace it rather than those who have suppressed their faculty to accept the same.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 4

لَوْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ وَلَداً لاصْطَفَي مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ سُبْحَانَهُ هُوَ اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ

4. Had Allah willed to take an offspring [***for Himself***]***, He could have chosen whom He willed out of those whom He created. But Glory is to Him!*** [***He is above such things***]. ***He is Allah, the One, the All-Subjugator.***

God Almighty has no [real] offspring:

(***"He begets not, nor was He begotten," 112:3***)

nor any adopted children:

(***"Had Allah willed to take an offspring*** [***for Himself***]***"***)***,***

since real offspring indicate corporeality, divisibility, bearing similitude, and having a spouse, whereas He is One.

He is neither divisible nor does He have similitude nor spouse. Polytheists also regarded a number of their objects of worship as Allah's daughters.

Treating of the false belief, the blessed Verse says:

"Had Allah willed to take an offspring [***for Himself***]***, He could have chosen whom He willed out of those whom He created. But Glory is to Him!*** [***He is above such things***]. ***He is Allah, the One, the All-Subjugator."***

At any rate, the blessed Verse is saying that having offspring is either for assistance or for spiritual

intimacy. Even reflection upon such impossible supposition does not necessitate having offspring since He could select one among His noble creatures, rather than an offspring, in order to attain to such a goal.

Nonetheless, He is One God Who is the eternal All-Subjugator of all things, Needless of the assistance of any entity. He is neither perturbed by anything hence His Needlessness for intimacy with anyone or anything, nor is he in need of progeny.

Consequently,

"Glory is to Him!"

He is above having real or adopted children.

As mentioned above, these ignorant and lightheaded disbelievers and polytheists considered angels to be Allah's offspring and some of them maintained affinities between Him and jinn and at times regarded Ezra ('Uzayr) or Jesus ('Īsa) as God's sons unaware of the manifest truth that God's need for real offspring would necessitate corporeality, divisibility (since an offspring is a part of the progenitor's being which separates from him), bearing similitude (because of the similarity between the progenitor and the offspring), and the need for having a consort.

God Almighty is Glorified of all these. Adopting children is also due to the need for corporeal, moral intimacy, and the like and the All-Mighty and All-Subjugating God is Needless of such things.

Therefore, the Most Beautiful Divine Names:

***"the One"* (*Wahid*)**

and

***"the All-Subjugating"* (*Qahhar*)**

constitute a decisive argument against such false beliefs.

It is noteworthy that the employment of the conjunction law ("***if***") connoting impossible conditions makes reference to the impossible supposition of God's adoption of children and had He any need for it, He would have no need for what they say rather He could have selected one of his chosen creatures.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 5

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَي النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمّيً أَلا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ

5. He has created the heavens and the earth with truth. He makes the night to go in the day and makes the day to go in the night. And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each running for an appointed term. Know that He is the Exalted in Might, the Oft-Forgiving.

The creation of the heavens and the earth, the rotations of the earth and the moon, and going the night into the day and vice versa are manifestations of Divine Exaltation in Might.

The blessed Verse substantiates the argument that God is Needless of His creatures and as an indication of His Unity and Exaltedness in Might is says:

"He has created the heavens and the earth with truth."

The truth of their creation demonstrates that the great final end has been nothing but the perfection of beings, particularly that of man, finally leading to Resurrection.

Following the treatment of this great creation, the Verse proceeds to make a reference in passing to their extraordinary arrangement, well measured alterations, and the fascinating and prevailing systematicity, saying:

"He makes the night to go in the day and makes the day to go in the night."

The expression is worthy of note – taking a glance without the globe at the earth's rotation on its axis leading to the succession of days and nights makes one notice that it is seems as if the dark ribbon of night wraps up the brightness of the day and vice versa.

It is to be noted that the verbal form ***yukawwir*** derives from takwir which is literally employed in the sense of "roll up, wrap up" an instance of which is mentioned in particular by philologists as "wind up [a turban]."

The delicacy of this Qur'anic expression is thus clarified; nonetheless, it is ignored by many an exeget who have make mention of other points which are not so consistent with the meaning of the word.

The point worthy of note is that the earth is globular rotating on its axis and as a consequence of the rotation, the black and white ribbons of night and day constantly rotate around it as if the white ribbon goes to the black ribbon on the one hand and on the other hand the opposite occurs.

Diverse expressions have been employed in the Holy Qur'an concerning the consecution of nights and days each of which makes a reference to a delicacy from a specific angle.

It is also said in the Holy Qur'an that:

"He merges the night into the day and He merges the day into the night"[5].

The latter expression designates the quiet and furtive consecution of days and nights.

It also says:

"He brings the night as a cover over the day"[6]

according to which the night is likened to a dark veil as if covering the brightness of the day. The blessed Verses in question treats of "winding" one over the other, the delicacy of which was mentioned above.

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the order and systematicity of arrangement of the world by saying:

"And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each running for an appointed term."

In its rotation on its axis or its movement with the totality of the solar system toward a specific point in the galaxy by no means demonstrates neither the least disorder, nor the moon in its rotation around on its axis and around the earth reveals any disorder.

All creatures are at His Command, totally subject to the laws of creation at all times.

Subjection of the sun and the moon may also indicate their subjection through Divine Permission, as mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And He has made the sun and the moon, both constantly pursuing their courses"[7]*.*

The Verse closes with a warning to polytheists and suggestion of treading the path leading to Divine Favor:

"Know that He is the Exalted in Might, the Oft-Forgiving."

However honorable and powerful polytheists and sinners may be, they may not escape Divine Chastisement. Thanks to His Oft-Forgiveness, He casts a veil on the sins of the repentant and bestows His Mercy on them.

The word:

ghaffar (***"Oft-Forgiving"***)

is intensive in form and derives from gh-f-r ("forgive").

The infinitive form ghufran is literally employed in the sense of wearing anything which keeps man from uncleanliness and impurity; applied to God Almighty, it denotes that He conceals the sins committed by the repentant servant and keeps him from the torment of chastisement.

He is Omnipotent and Oft-Forgiving; the Most Gracious and the All-Subjugator. The accompaniment of these two Most Beautiful Names at the close of the Verse creates a sense of fear and hope in servants of God which mainly and finally leads to human perfection.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 6

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِى بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقاً مِنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلاثٍ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّي تُصْرَفُونَ

6. He created you from a single soul; then made from him his wife. And He has sent down for you [***thanks to His Omnipotence***] ***of cattle eight pairs*** [***of the sheep, goats, oxen, and camels, two each, male and female***]. ***He creates you in the wombs of your mothers: creation after creation in three veils of darkness*** [***flesh, skin, and blood***]. ***Such is Allah your Lord. His is the sovereignty. There is no god*** [***to be worshipped***] ***but He. How then do you turn away*** [***from the Straight Path***]***?***

In spite of physical differences, all men, irrespective of sex and color of complexion, share the like genus and soul

(***"single soul"***).

The blessed Verse once more treats of the Signs of Divine Glory, His creation, and some of the diverse Bounties bestowed upon mankind.

The Verse opens with the creation of man saying:

"He created you from a single soul; then made from him his wife."

Creation of all men from

"a single soul"

is a reference to the question of the creation of Adam, our primeval ancestor.

All human beings, though diverse in creation, dispositions, faculties, and tastes trace back to one common origin, namely Adam.

The clause:

"then made from him his wife"

actually indicates that God created Adam; then, He created his wife from the remainder of his clay; as a consequence of which the creation of Adam precedes that of Eve and his offspring.

"Then" (***thumma***)

does not connote temporal posteriority at all times, but at times it is employed to demonstrate delay in expressing something; an instance of which is "We noticed your work today; then we saw the work you

did yesterday;" yet, what was carried out yesterday certainly precedes that of today.

Some exegets have maintained that the aforesaid expression is a reference to the question of "the world of pre-existence" ('alam al-dharr) and the creation of Adam's offspring following his creation and prior to that of Eve in the form of ants is inaccurate, as mentioned above under 7:172.

It is also worthy of note that the creation of Adam's wife was not done out of Adam's body, but from the remainder of his clay, as clearly specified in Islamic traditions. Nonetheless, according to a tradition, Eve was created out of Adam's lowest left rib which is groundless.

The tradition derives from Jewish and Christian traditions (Isra'iliyyat) and is consistent with the second chapter of the Book of Genesis, namely the available distorted Torah.

Furthermore, it is inconsistent with observation and sense, since as per the tradition in question, one of Adam's ribs was removed from which Eve was created, as a consequence of which man are supposed to have one rib less in their left side, whereas we know that men and women do not differ in the number of ribs and the difference is no more than a legend.

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of the question of the creation of quadrupeds as a significant means of human life. Men use them to produce clothes out of their skins, nourishment from their milk and meat.

They make clothes and different means of life out of their skin and fleece.

Quadrupeds are used by men as well as means of transportation:

"And He has sent down for you [***thanks to His Omnipotence***] ***of cattle eight pairs."***

By

"eight pairs",

the Verse intends to connote "of the sheep, goats, oxen, and camels, two each, male and female," since the word pair (zawj) is applied to either of the sexes, the males and females of the animals enumerated above make eight pairs; however it is not consistent with other Arabic expressions; consequently, Adam's wife, namely Eve, is mentioned in the opening of the Verse in question as the

"pair."

As mentioned above, the expression:

"He has sent down for you"

does not indicate sending down quadrupeds from above, but it denotes "descent from a higher state of

hierarchy” as a Bounty bestowed upon those occupying a lower state.

A tradition narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as), concerning the interpretation of the Verse in question,

“sending down eight quadrupeds in pairs is their creation by God.”[8]

Some have also maintained that:

inzal **(*“sending down”*)**

is taken from nuzul (“showing hospitality to guests; first food served to a guest”) as mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

“therein are they to dwell forever, an entertainment from Allah”[9].

It is to be noted that even though quadrupeds are not used for transportation as they were used in the past, but the use of such animals has been on the increase for making other significant products.

Even today, man mainly uses quadrupeds for their milk, meat, clothes, and other means of life produced out of their wool and skin; as a consequence of which breeding them constitutes one of the significant revenues for powerful countries.

The blessed Verse proceeds to treat of other forms of Divine creation, saying:

“He creates you in the wombs of your mothers: creation after creation in three veils of darkness [***flesh, skin, and blood***]***.”***

It is needless to say that

“creation after creation”

designates consecutive creations rather than creation at one single time.

It is worthy of note that the verbal form yakhluqukum is in the present tense, indicating progressiveness and making a brief but significant reference to extraordinary developments and the different remarkable forms of the fetus in the womb which is according to embryologists one of the most extraordinary and the most intricate forms of Divine creation such that the science of embryology is a complete course in Divine Unity and theology.

Few people may study such questions in details and fail to praise the Creator.

The phrase:

“three veils of darkness”

refers to the darkness of the womb and the chorion consisting of three thick membranes or veils covering the fetus.

Ordinary painters have to paint in a well-lit workspace, but the Creator of mankind paints such fascinating paintings in such strange dark place that everyone is enthralled by it, where no one may have access to it. He constantly provides for the nourishment of the fetus that is in a dire need of it for growth.

In the well known prayer titled 'Arafa which is a complete and perfect course on Divine Unity, enumerating Divine Bounties and manifestations of His Omnipotence before His Threshold, the Chief of the Martyrs (Sayyid al-Shuhada'), Imam Husayn (as), says:

"You made my creation to be preceded by drops of semen, then you proceeded with my creation through placing me in the three veils of darkness, amidst flesh, skin, and blood. You provided for all my vital functions; then you brought me into the world in perfect health."[10]

Following the reference to the tripartite chains of Divine Unity regarding the creation of men and quadrupeds and the developments of fetus, the blessed Verse closes thus:

"Such is Allah your Lord. His is the sovereignty. There is no god [***to be worshipped***] ***but He. How then do you turn away*** [***from the Straight Path***]***?"***

It seems as if following an observation of such glorious manifestations of Divine Unity, man has been able to experience personally such manifestations; then the blessed Verse proceeds to make a reference to His Sacred Essence saying:

"Such is Allah your Lord."

Any attentive perceiver may perceive Him beyond such manifestations. The eyes of the head and the heart see the manifestations and the Creator respectively.

(***"You have come out with many a manifestation, so that I may look at you with many an eye!"***)

The expressions

"your Lord"

and

"His is the sovereignty"

are provided as arguments for the exclusivity of the Divine Pure Essence as the object of worship expressed in the formula

"*There is no god but Allah*."

He is the Creator as well as the Sole Sovereign and Nurturer; in other words, the Sovereignty in all the world of existence solely belongs to Him, so other entities in this world do not deserve to be the objects of worship.

The blessed Verse calls the ignorant thus:

"Why do you turn away from the Straight Path of Divine Unity?"

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 7

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ وَلا يَرْضَى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ وَإِنْ تَشْكُرُوا يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ وَلا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَى ثُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

7. If you disbelieve, then indeed Allah is not in need of you; He likes not disbelief for His servants. And if you are grateful, He is pleased therewith for you. No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return, and He will inform you what you used to do. Indeed, He is the Omniscient of that which is in breasts.

The preceding Verse treats of Divine Bounties in the creation of man and the provisions bestowed upon him by God. Verse seven makes mention of man's obligation which is his gratitude for the bestowal of Divine Bounties.

Therefore, the blessed Verse in question says:

"If you disbelieve, then indeed Allah is not in need of you"

since His servants will reap the recompense of their disbelief and gratitude.

It further adds that Divine Needlessness does not mean that His servants are not supposed to be grateful for the Divine Bounties bestowed upon them nor are they permitted to disbelieve, since obligation is another Divine Bounty,

"He likes not disbelief for His servants and if you are grateful, He is pleased therewith for you."

The Verse in question proceeds with treating of another question, namely any man's responsibility for his acts and deeds, since the question of obligation will remain incomplete without such obligation:

(***"No bearer of burdens shall bear the burden of another"***).

It is worthy of note that obligation without recompense is meaningless.

The Verse closes with the question of Resurrection and man's return to God Who shall inform him of his past deeds:

(*"Then to your Lord is your return, and He will inform you what you used to do"*).

It is worthy of note that Divine Reward and Retribution of human acts and deeds necessitate being fully aware of secrets.

Thus the Verse comes to Its close:

"Indeed, He is the Omniscient of that which is in breasts."

Therefore, the philosophy of obligation, its characteristics, human responsibility, and Divine Reward and Retribution are expressed in concise and consistent clauses. In the mean time, the Verse is a decisive reply to the followers of the school of predestination whose number among Islamic schools of thought has been unfortunately large.

The blessed Verse explicitly says:

"He is never pleased with His servants' disbelief"

which clearly bears testimony to the fact that contrary to the false belief maintained by the followers of the school of predestination it is not His Will that disbelievers disbelieve in Him, since as long as He is not pleased with something, He will not will it. Divine Will and Satisfaction are not apart.

It is a source of wonder that the biased have made attempts to conceal the evident meaning of the clause by restricting the meaning of:

"servants" (*'ibad*)

to the pious or the infallible; however the word in question clearly embraces all servants. God is never pleased with any of His servant's disbelief in the same manner that He is pleased with their gratitude.

It is also noteworthy that everyone's responsibility against his own acts and deeds are acknowledged by all Divine religions.[11]

It is also possible that a wrong doer may have an accomplice the render him support in one way or another, an instance of which is the one who innovates some vicious thing or tradition and whoever acts upon them will be responsible like the innovator against the sin of innovation of vicious things.[12]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 8

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا رَبَّهُ مُنِيباً إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلَهُ نِعْمَةً مِنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُو إِلَيْهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلَّهِ أَنْدَاداً

لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيلاً إِنَّكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ

8. And when some hurt touches man, he cries to his Lord, turning to Him in repentance. But when He bestows a favor upon him from Himself, he forgets that for which he cried for before* [*for its removal*]*, and he sets up equals to Allah, in order to mislead* [*himself and others*] *from His Path. Say: "Take pleasure in your disbelief for a while: surely you are of the dwellers of the Fire!"

Man is of a small capacity for tolerating hardships and when hardships touch him, he cries out but the Holy Qur'an criticizes him for his transient attention toward God in vicissitudes of life and says that he forgets God when he enjoys comfort:

(***"And when some hurt touches man, he cries to his Lord"***).

The preceding Verses produce arguments for Divine Unity and man's making attempts at acquiring knowledge about Him through reflecting upon the signs of His Glory in horizons and souls (afaq wa anfus); however, the blessed Verse in question opens with Divine Unity as perceived through man's primordial disposition thus clarifying that man's perception through his intellection and studying the order of creation is something innate in his natural disposition manifesting themselves in vicissitudes and hardships; nonetheless, when the storm of disasters is abated, such forgetful man is once more preoccupied with neglect and vanity.

The blessed Verse says:

"When some hurt touches man* [*the Light of Divine Unity illuminates his heart*]*, he cries to his Lord, turning to Him in repentance. But when He bestows a favor upon him from Himself, he forgets that for which he cried for before* [*for its removal*]*, and he sets up equals to Allah, in order to mislead* [*himself and others*] *from His Path."
"Man"

ad hoc makes a reference to those people who are uncultured and unrefined since they turn away from prophetic teachings, otherwise those refined by men of God, like their educators, remember Him at all times in ups and downs and seek Divine Favor.

***"Hurt"* (*darr*)**

ad hoc indicates any kind of physical or mental harm or discomfort. The verbal form ***"khawwalahu,"*** deriving from khawl is employed in the sense of constant taking care of something or someone and since such care necessitates bestowal of favor, the word designates "bestow."

Some exegets also maintain that khawl indicates rendering service; therefore, ***khawwalahu*** indicates "granted him servants," and it is also applied to bestowing favor to someone. Some have also taken the word in the sense of taking pride; as a consequence of which they take the meaning as honor someone

through bestowal of a favor.[13]

The above explanations reflect the question of Divine bestowal of Favors and Bounties and His special care for His servants.

Muniban, as an adverb of manner, indicates that at the time of hardship when the veils of vanity and neglect are removed, man abandons everything and everyone besides God Almighty and turns to Him.

The word:

"repentance" (***inaba***)

demonstrates that God Almighty is man's origin and place of return.

Andad (***"equals"***)

is the plural form of nidd which is close in meaning to mithl; however the latter possesses a wider range of meaning, since the former is only used in the sense of likeness in essence.

The verbal form:

"sets up" (***ja'ala, literally "set up"*** [***past tense***])

demonstrates that man falsely imagines equals and peers for God, whereas it is inconsistent with reality.

The clause:

"in order to mislead [***himself and others***] ***from His Path"***

reflects the vanity of those in error who make attempts at misleading others to error. Man a time the Holy Qur'an refers to the link between reflection upon Divine Unity through innate primordial disposition and vicissitudes of life as the scenes of its manifestation.

The low capacity of forbearance makes this vain man to turn to Divine Unity in vicissitudes, but when the storms of disasters are abated, he obdurately treads the path of polytheism.

Many are such inconstant and capricious people and few are those who may not be perturbed by triumphs, Bounties, and storms of vicissitudes.

A small vessel or a pond is easily perturbed by a breeze, but the Pacific Ocean, because of its vastness, may not be agitated by harsh storms, hence the title "Pacific."

The blessed Verse closes with a decisive warning to these people:

"Say: 'Take pleasure in your disbelief for a while [***and spend a few days in neglect and vanity, but***

know that]***: surely you are of the dwellers of the Fire!’”***

How may such narrow minded and misleading person have any other thing in store for him?

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 9

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِداً وَقَائِماً يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُو رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

9. Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord [***is better or such a person***]***? Say: “Are those who know equal to those who know not?” It is only men of understanding who will remember*** [***and get a lesson***]***.***

Alongside the preceding Verses depicting the characteristics of the people of Fire, the blessed Verse in question treats of the believers’ characteristics.

The preceding Verse says that some people solely invoke God in hardships and forget Him in peace of mind and comfort whereas the Verse question says that believers irrespective of hardships and comforts remember God Almighty at all times.

This Verse reflects the employment of the Qur’anic methodological treatment of questions to ask the rhetorical question:

Is such person worthy of Divine Reward or the one who worships God Almighty:

“prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the [***chastisement***] ***of the Hereafter and Hoping for the Mercy of his Lord?”***

The disbelieving, forgetful, capricious, astray, and misleading man is too apart from the one whose soul is awakened and when the neglectful are asleep prostrates before his Friend and invokes Him in awe and hope.

They neither regard themselves secure from chastisement in comfort nor do they lose their hope for His Mercy in hardship; as a consequence of which they constantly, willfully, and attentively tread the Path toward their Friend.

The present participle:

qanit (***“obedient”***)

indicates the accompaniment of obedience with humbleness. ana’ is the plural form of ana’ which

indicates hour and portion of time.

The emphasis laid on the hour of night reveals that at that time presence of heart is more and impurities springing from dissimulation are less than any other time.

"Prostrating" (***sajidan***)

Precedes:

"standing in prayer" (***qa'iman***)

since prostration is a higher state of worship and the absoluteness of Divine Mercy and Its lack of restriction to the Hereafter reflects the inclusivity of Divine Mercy in this world and the Hereafter.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) attested in 'Ilal al-Shara'i' and Kafi:

"Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night"

is interpreted as night prayer.[14]

Addressing the Prophet (S), the Verse reads:

"Are those who know equal to those who know not?"

The reply to this rhetorical question follows thus:

"It is only men of understanding who will remember [***and get a lesson***]***."***

Though the question is signifies a wide range of meaning explicitly referring to those who know and those who know not, men of understanding and the ignorant, but owing to the fact that the preceding question treats of the inequality of believers praying to God at night time and disbelievers, the latter question alludes to the same question, namely those obdurate disbelievers are not on a par with sincere devout believers.

It is to be noted that the aforementioned rhetorical question and is regarded as one of the fundamental slogans of the Islamic faith bears testimony to the Glory of knowledge and the knowledgeable against the ignorant and with due consideration of its inclusivity, it is evident that the two groups are neither on a par at Divine Threshold nor from the viewpoint of the aware; they are far apart in this world and the Hereafter. They are inwardly and outwardly unlike to one another.

The word:

knowledge (***'ilm***)

is not employed ad hoc in the sense of knowing some terms or the material links amongst things; in other words, it does not indicate "formal sciences" but it denotes a specific knowledge and awareness that leads man to obedience (qunut) to God Almighty and fear of Judgment makes man to set his hopes on Divine Mercy.

This the truth of knowledge and formal sciences constitute knowledge in case they are in this vein; otherwise, they lead to vanity, neglect, wrong doing, and corruption in this world and they are no more than futile discussions not leading to spiritual realization.

Contrary to what the ignorant imagine regarding religion as the opium of people, the most fundamental prophetic calls addressed gaining knowledge thereby proclaiming their objection against ignorance at all times.

Besides the Qur'anic Verses imbued with the exposition of such truth, Islamic traditions abound in such unimaginable expressions concerning the significance of gaining knowledge.

According to a prophetic tradition:

"Life is solely fruitful for two people: a knowledgeable person whose views are followed and students giving their ears to a scholar."[15]

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Scholars are the inheritors of prophets, since the latter left no worldly possessions but they left sciences and traditions and whoever possesses anything enjoys abundant possessions of prophets' heritage."

Imam Sadiq (as) further adds:

"Be careful from whom you gain your knowledge [*from real scholars or pretenders to knowledge*]. *Know that at any era, there are just and trustworthy individuals from amongst us, the Prophet's* (*S*) *Household, who reject the extremists' distortions, the deviants' baseless claims, and the justifications of the ignorant in order to remove the impurities from this pure religion."*[16]

The blessed Verse in question makes mention of three groups of people: those who know, those who do not know, and men of understanding.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) includes an interpretation concerning the three groups mentioned herein:

"We are those who know, our enemies are those who do not know, and our followers are men of understanding."[17]

According to a tradition, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) departed one night from the Mosque at Kufa toward his house while he was accompanied by one of his intimate friends, Kumayl ibn

Ziyad. Passing by a house from which they could hear a man reciting:

"Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord"

with a pleasing and sad voice, Kumayl was quite pleased with the spiritual state of the man though he refrained from uttering any word.

Imam 'Ali (as) turned to him and said:

"Do not be pleased by this man's voice. He is among the people of the Hell! I will inform you of that soon!"

Kumayl was taken aback since Imam 'Ali (as) had been able to read his mind and besides, he had informed him of the apparently pious man's place in Hell.

Before long, Seceders (Khariji's, khawarij) disobeyed Imam 'Ali (as) and the Imam waged war against them, though they knew the Qur'an by heart as It was revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam (S).

Standing among the carcasses of the rebellious disbelievers, Imam 'Ali (as), holding his sword in his hand, turned to Kumayl and pointed with his sword at one of heads fallen on the battleground and said unto him:

"O Kumayl! Is one who is obedient to Allah, prostrating himself or standing in prayer during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy of his Lord."

By which he meant that it was the same person reciting the Holy Qur'an that night and whose seemingly spiritual state had made you wonder. Kumal kissed the Imam and prayed for repentance.[18]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 10

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

10. Say: "O My servants who believe! Stand in awe of your Lord and keep your duty to Him. Good is for those who do good in this world and Allah's earth is spacious** [**so if you cannot worship Allah at a place, then emigrate to another**]**! Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full without reckoning."

Having faith is not sufficient and it is supposed to be accompanied with fear of God Almighty and abstention from committing sins:

(***“O My servants who believe, stand in awe of your Lord and keep your duty to Him”***).

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) said:

“There shall be no reckoning for a group of people and they will be admitted to Paradise without answering questions.”

Then he recited the blessed Verse:

“Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full without reckoning.”

Following the discussion concerning the comparison between vain disbelievers and believers obedient to Divine Command and also the one between

“those who know”

and

“those who do not know,”

this Verse and the following Verses treat of the main guidelines of sincere and devout servants in the form of “seven injunctions” included in a number Verses each opening with:

***“say”* (*qul*)**.

The Verse opens with fear of God and asks the Prophet (S):

“Say: O My servants who believe! Stand in awe of your Lord and keep your duty to Him.”

The first guideline is fear of God and abstention from committing sins and the sense of obligation and responsibility at Divine Threshold. Fear of God serves as a shield against fire protecting man against deviation from the Straight Path. It is the main possession on the Day of Resurrection, and the standard for human character and dignity at Divine Threshold.

The second injunction is concerned with

“doing righteous good deeds”

in this world which is the abode of deeds and encourages people to act upon it through making mention of the consequences of doing good, saying:

“Good is for those who do good in this world.”

Doing good in this world through good words and deeds, in thoughts regarding friends and strangers leads to great rewards in this world and the Hereafter. Fear of God is a preventive factor and doing good

is a moving one and the composite of which is abstention from committing sins and carrying out obligatory and preferable religious duties.

The third injunction is encouraging believers to

"emigrate"

from the centers of polytheism, disbelief, and sin:

"Allah's earth is spacious** [**so if you cannot worship Allah at a place, then emigrate to another**]**!"

It is a response to those people of frail faith who sought pretexts and said that they were not able to carry out our Divine obligations under polytheist rule at Mecca.

The Holy Qur'an says that God's earth is not limited to Mecca; Emigrate to Medina, the earth is spacious. Move from centers polluted with polytheism, disbelief, and suppression hindering your freedom and carrying out your obligations to another place.

The question of emigration constitutes one the most significant issues that not only played the most fundamental role in the triumph of the Islamic rule as a consequence of which served as the starting point of the history of Islam but also enjoys an extraordinary significance at all times thereby believers do not surrender against pressure and suppression prevalent in their environment and on the other hand leads to the dissemination of the Islamic faith to different regions of the world.

In this vein, the Holy Qur'an[19] says:

"Indeed, as for those whom the angels take** [**in death**] **while they are wronging themselves they** [**angels responsible for taking away their souls**] **ask** [**them**]**: 'in what** [**conditions**] **were you?' They reply: 'We were weak and oppressed on the earth.' They ask: 'Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?' Such men will find their abode in Hell – what an ominous place!"

The Verse clearly indicates that where emigration is possible, no pretext as to pressure and suppression is to be acknowledged at Divine threshold.[20]

Since emigration usually entails many a problem in different aspects of life, the fourth injunction is thus expressed regarding patience and perseverance:

"Only those who are patient shall receive their reward in full without reckoning."

The verbal form:

yuwaffa (***"shall receive in full"***)

deriving from w-f-y on the one hand and the phrase:

bi-ghayri hisabin (***"without reckoning"***)

on the other clearly demonstrates that the perseverant patient shall receive the best reward at Divine Threshold and patience and perseverance are above any other act.

A well known Prophetic tradition narrated by Imam Sadiq thus bears testimony to the significance of perseverance and patience:

"When the scrolls of deeds are unrolled and the scales of Divine Justice are installed, there shall be neither of the twain for those who were perseverant despite being entangled with hardships and vicissitudes."

Then the Noble Prophet (S) recited the Verse in question according to which God Almighty shall reward the patient without reckoning.

Some maintain that the occasion of revelation of the blessed Verse was the emigration of a large number of Muslims to Ethiopia led by Ja'far ibn Abi Talib. It has been reiterated above that occasions of Revelation provide further exposition for the Verses rather than restrict their significance.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 11 - 13

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصاً لَهُ الدِّينَ

وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ

11. Say: "Indeed I am commanded to worship Allah when at the same time I have rendered the faith pure for him."
12. Say: "Indeed I am commanded to be the first Muslim [***i.e., the first of those who submit themselves to Allah***].
13. Say: "Indeed if I disobey my Lord, I am afraid of the torment of a great Day."

The Noble Prophet (S) was keen on worshipping God sincerely and carrying out other obligations of his despite the agreement or disagreement of others;

(***"I am commanded; sincerely; the first Muslim"***);

as a consequence of which the Noble Verse says:

"Say that having purified my religion for him, I am commanded to worship God."

Verse 12 reads:

"I am commanded to be the first Muslim, namely be the first to submit fully to Divine Command."

Verse 13 is thus concerned with the seventh and the last injunction, fear of Divine Chastisement on the Day of Resurrection,

"Say that if I disobey my Lord, I am afraid of the torment of the great Day** [**of Resurrection**]**."

It is herein indicated that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is one of the servants of God; he is also commanded to fully submit to Divine Command.

His obligations even far exceed others since he is supposed to be the forerunner in this respect. He neither claimed divinity nor did he deviate the path of sincere servantship, but he took pride in such state hence he is the model for all Muslims.

He never regarded himself to enjoy any privilege and the same clearly indicates his high rank and truthfulness, unlike pretenders who expect others to worship them claiming that they stand above human beings in terms of rank, essence, and origin and calling their adherents at times to provide them annually with gold and precious stones as per their weight!

The Noble Prophet (S) is actually saying that he is unlike tyrant sovereigns who oblige people to carry out obligations but regard themselves superior to carrying out obligations.

It demonstrates a significant point pertaining to the formative side of education, namely any educator and leader is supposed to be the forerunner in acting upon the injunctions of his school; he is supposed to be the first believer in his own doctrine, the most assiduous individual and exceed others in making sacrifices such that others trust his sincerity and regard him as a role model in all matters.

It is thus clarified that his being the forerunner of total submission to Divine Will is true since he was the first Muslim in all respects, e.g. in terms of faith, sincere devotion, deeds, making sacrifices, jihad, resistance, and perseverance. All accounts of his life bear testimony to the same.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 14 - 15

قُلِ اللَّهَ أَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصاً لَهُ دِينِي

فَاعْبُدُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ قُلْ إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَلا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ

14. Say: "Allah Alone I worship while I have rendered the faith pure for him."
15. So worship what you like besides Him. Say: "[real] losers are those who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed that will be a manifest loss!"

Monotheism surpasses prophetic teachings. Sincere devotion has been so far mentioned four times in this Chapter since history reveals that accretion of superstitions, idiosyncratic tastes, and distortions have been the worst blights of religion.

Following an exposition of the seven injunctions in the preceding Verses, i.e., fear of God, doing righteous good deeds, emigration, patience, sincere devotion, total submission [to Divine Will], and dread of the Master of the day of judgment, emphasis is once more put on ethical norms particularly those against diverse motives behind polytheism, saying:

"Allah Alone I worship while I have rendered the faith pure for him. So Worship what you like besides Him, [since real] losers are those who will lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection."

They neither made use of their own life, nor did their families could have led them to deliverance, nor could they provide them with honor and intercession at Divine Threshold.

"Indeed that will be a manifest loss!"

The word

"loss"

is thrice reiterated to awaken man and make him aware of the loss of the soul on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 16

لَهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ ذَلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ اللَّهُ بِهِ عِبَادَهُ يَا عِبَادِ فَاتَّقُونِ

16. They shall have coverings of Fire above them and coverings [of Fire] beneath them. With this [torment] Allah frightens His servants: "O My servants, therefore fear Me!"

The chastisement of those who have turned away from God Almighty and have turned toward others and have thereby incurred loss is that fire encompasses them from all sides.

The Noble Verse in question thus presents a depiction of manifest loss:

"for and above them stand canopies of fire and beneath them are canopies of fire as well!"

Thus, they are enfolded with fire. What loss may be worse than that? What torment may be more excruciating that that?

The word ***sulal***, the plural form of sulla, indicates “awning, marquee, and canopy” installed from above, hence its application to the sense of a carpet spread underneath is a metaphorical extension of the semantic range of the word.

Some exegets maintain that since the people of Hell are entangled in the layers of Hell, coverings of fire are both above and below them and even the word sulal is not supposed to be applied to lower coverings.

A similar depiction is to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an[21]:

“On the Day when the torment shall cover them from above them and from underneath their feet and it will be said: ‘Taste what you used to do!’”

It is a depiction of the state of their world in which ignorance, disbelief, and wrong doing encompassed them.

Further emphasis is laid on it to give them a lesson:

“With this [***torment***] ***Allah frightens His servants: ‘O My servants, therefore fear Me!’”***

The word:

‘ibad (***“servants”***)

and its relation to “God” reiterated in this blessed Verse indicates that Divine Warning against torment is for His Mercy and Favor so that His servants do not meet such ominous fate; as a consequence of which it becomes clear that the word ibad ad hoc does not necessarily signify “believers” rather it is applied to everyone, since in case of wrong doing, no one is secure from Divine torment.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 17 - 18

وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَى فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ

الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

17. Those who avoid false deities [***powers antithetical to God***] ***by not worshipping them and turn to Allah, for them are glad tidings; so announce the good news to My servants.***
18. Those who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof, those are [***the ones***] ***whom Allah***

has guided and those are men of understanding.

One of the characteristics of sincere believers and God's servants is their avoidance from false deities, since it is a prelude to attentiveness to God.

These Verses compare and contrast biased and obdurate polytheists for whom Hell fire is in store with truth seeking servants of God, saying:

"Those who avoid false deities** [**powers antithetical to God**] **by not worshipping them and turn to Allah, for them are glad tidings; so announce the good news to My servants."

Since the word bushra is used in the broad sense of the word, it encompasses all kinds of

"good tidings"

for Divine Bounties, material and spiritual; however such inclusive good tidings solely belongs to those who avoid from worshipping false deities and turn toward God as it embraces faith and doing righteous good deeds.

Furthermore, the word taghut is taken from tughiyan indicating transgression of bounds.

Therefore, the word is applied to any object of worship other than God Almighty, e.g. Satan and tyrants. It is worthy of note that it is used both in the singular and the plural.

"Avoidance from taghut,"

employed in its broad sense, indicates any kind of polytheism, idolatry, concupiscence, Satan worship, and submission to tyrant rulers.

"Turning toward Allah" (***inaba ila Allah***)

embraces fear of God, piety, and faith. It is needless to say that such people deserve the good tidings.

It is worthy of note that worshipping Taghut is not restricted to bowing down and prostration in worship, but it includes any kind of obedience as well.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"One who obeys a tyrant ruler, he worships him.[22]

Thus the elite servants of God are represented:

'Announce the good news to My servants.'"

Verse 18 says:

"Those who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof, those are** [**the ones**] **whom Allah has guided and those are men of understanding."

These two Verses have turned to an Islamic slogan demonstrating Muslim freethinking and selectiveness in different issues.

According to Verse 17,

"so announce the good news to My servants,"

then these servants are presented as people who listen to the words irrespective of the speakers' characteristics and make use of their intellection to select the best of them. They are devoid of any kind of bias or obduracy, nor is their thought limited by anything.

They seek truth and turn toward it wherever they find it. They drink their fill of the pure springhead of truth. They are not only after truth and good words, but also are they selective between good and better and choose the latter. This is the characteristic of a true Muslim and a truth seeking believer.

Regarding the word:

qawl (***"word"***)

in the clause:

yastami'un al-qawl ("[***They***] ***listen to Word"***)***,***

exegets present different exegeses.

Some maintain that

"Word"

indicates the Holy Qur'an and whatever is included in It in terms of obedience and lawfulness and regard following the best to indicate obedience to God Almighty.

Some others hold that the word is employed in the broad sense of Divine Command irrespective of being mentioned in the Holy Qur'an or elsewhere. However, there exists no argument to substantiate such restricted exegeses, since the apparent meaning of the Verse includes any kind of word.

The faithful servants of God select the best from amongst all the words and follow the same and act upon it.

It is worthy of note that as per the blessed Verse, those following Divine Guidance are solely considered to be amongst such people as men of understanding solely belong to such people.

It makes a reference to the fact that such people are outwardly and inwardly guided; in other words, they are outwardly guided through intellection and understanding and inwardly through Divine Light and Assistance. Such truth seeking freethinkers may solely take pride in the twain.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 19 - 20

أَفَمَنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ أَفَأَنْتَ تُنْقِذُ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ

لَكِنِ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا غُرَفٌ مَبْنِيَّةٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ لا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ الْمِيعَادَ

19. Is then one against whom the Word of chastisement is justified** [may be guided?] **Will you save him who is in the Fire?
20. But those who fear their Lord and keep their duty to Him, for them are built lofty rooms** [in Paradise]**, one above another under which rivers flow.** [This is] **the Promise of Allah and Allah does not fail in** [His] **Promise.

Owing to their obduracy and bias, some people prevent themselves from Divine Forgiving;

(***"against whom the Word of chastisement is justified"***).

The blessed Verse is saying that the Noble Prophet (S) was keen on guiding polytheists and those in error and was saddened by those who deviated from the true Path and were not attentive toward realities.

Verse 20 is a consolation for him by saying that this world is arena of free will and trial as a consequence of which some people, owing to their disbelief, deserve Hell fire, saying:

"Is then one against whom the Word of chastisement is justified** [may be guided?] **Will you save him who is in the Fire?"

The clause:

"against whom the Word of chastisement is justified"

alludes to Qur'anic Verses, e.g.

"That I will fill Hell with you** [Satan] **and those of them that follow you, together!"[23]

Justification of Divine Word regarding chastisement of this group was not evidently preordained, since they taste Divine chastisement because of their evil deeds and their persistence in wrong doing, corruption, and sinfulness, such that their spirit of faith and distinction is doomed to perdition and they all

deserve Hell fire.

Thus, the clause:

"Will you save him who is in the Fire?"

is a delicate allusion to the fact that their being doomed to Hell fire is so evident that it is as if they are in fire now. It is to be noted that such people have severed all their ties with God Almighty and are thus left with no way toward deliverance; even the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) who is a

"Mercy for all the world"

may not save them from Divine chastisement.

As a source of consolation for the Noble Prophet (S) and believers, the blessed Verse closes thus:

"But those who fear their Lord and keep their duty to Him, for them are built lofty rooms [***in Paradise***]***, one above another under which rivers flow."***

The people of Hell dwell in coverings of fire:

(***"They shall have coverings of Fire above them and coverings*** [***of Fire***] ***beneath them"***)

but for the people of Paradise are:

"built lofty rooms [***in Paradise***]***, one above another under which rivers flow,"***

since looking at flowers, water, rivers, and gardens from above the rooms is more pleasing.

The word:

ghuraf

is the plural form of ghurfa ("lofty room") is taken from gharf indicating "take up; ladle" hence the water taken from the river for drinking is referred to as ghurfa; however, it is figuratively applied to the upper stories of buildings.

Such beautiful lofty rooms in Paradise are further embellished with the rivers flowing underneath, thus the blessed Verse further adds:

"under which rivers flow."

The Verse closes with:

"[***This is***] ***the Promise of Allah and Allah does not fail in*** [***His***] ***Promise."***

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 21

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعاً مُخْتَلِفاً أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرّاً ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَاماً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

21. See you not that Allah sends down water from the sky and causes it to penetrate the earth [***then makes it to spring up***] ***as water springs and afterward thereby produces crops of different colors and afterwards they wither and you see them turn yellow; then He makes them dry and broken pieces. Indeed, in this is a Reminder from men of understanding*** [***to know that the world is transient***].

Rain is the source of springs and subterranean waters. Natural phenomena serve to fulfill Divine Will (making plants to grow is God's work but it is done by means of water). In the blessed Verse in question, the Holy Qur'an once more returns to the arguments substantiating Divine Unity and the Hereafter and pursues to complete the foregoing discussions concerning disbelief and faith.

From amongst the signs of Divine Glory and Lordship in the world of existence, mention are made of sending down rain from the sky and making verdure grow with many a color out of the colorless water, different stages of life, and attaining to the final stage.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S), the Verse gives a lesson to all believers, saying:

"See you not that Allah sends down water from the sky?"

The life giving drops of rain are sent down from the sky. They penetrate the penetrable layer of the earth and the process of penetration stops at the impenetrable layer. The water fills the subterranean basins and thence it exudes in the forms of rivers, manmade subterranean water canals, and spring wells.

The clause:

salakahu (***"caused it*** [***rain water***] ***to penetrate it*** [***the earth***]***"***)

makes a brief reference to what has been already mentioned. The word ***yanabi'*** is the plural form of yanbu' ("spring") is taken from n-b-' ("well up; gush forth [water]").

Had the earth had no impenetrable layer, one single drop of water would not have been reserved in it and all rain would have flowed into seas.

There would have been no spring, nor manmade subterranean water canal, nor well. Had it had solely one penetrable layer, all rain would have penetrated into the earth such that it would have been impossible to have access to it.

The two penetrable and impenetrable layers are made use of in digging shallow, semi-deep, and deep wells.

The Verse further adds:

"Afterward thereby [*God Almighty*] ***produces crops of different colors."***

The kinds of plants, e.g. wheat, barley, rice, and corn, as well as their qualities and colors differ; some are light green in color, some have broad and some narrow and delicate leaves.

The word zar' is applied to plants with fragile stems, as the opposite of shajar often applied to trees with strong trunks.

The former is broader in its semantic range embracing non-nutritive plants, e.g. different kinds of flowers, luxurious plants, and medicinal herbs extraordinarily diverse in types, forms, and colors, such that at times different colors are quite interestingly and delicately intertwined in one branch, stem, twig, or even one single flower or blossom which sing the song of Divine Glory and Unity.

The Verse further treats of the other stages of the plant:

"afterward thereby produces crops of different colors and afterwards they wither and you see them turn yellow."

Harsh winds blow uprooting those whose roots are weak,

"then He makes them dry and broken pieces."

It serves as a reminder for thinkers and intellectuals,

"Indeed, in this is a Reminder from men of understanding."

It is a reminder referring to the well measured and astonishing system of the world of existence and Divine Lordship reflected in this astounding scene and also a reminder of the end of life and extinguishing the flames of life, Resurrection, and the raising of the dead.

Despite the fact that the Verse depicts the world of plants, but It warns mankind that the same happens in your lifespan, though whose duration may differ; however they share the same features: birth, youth and rigor, withering away and old age, and finally death.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 22

أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلامِ فَهُوَ عَلَى نُورٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

22. Is he whose breast Allah has opened to [***convert to***] ***Islam, so that he is*** [***alighted on***] ***light from His Lord*** [***like someone entangled with bias, obduracy, and vanity***]***? So woe to those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of Allah! They are in plain error!***

The Islamic faith rests on arguments and one possessing extension of mind (sharh sadr) may draw a distinction between truth and falsity through Divine Light.

The blessed Verse in question is asking:

"Is the one whose breast is opened to convert the Islamic faith by God and is mounted on Divine Light is on a par with the lightless hardhearted deprived of Divine Guidance?"

The Verse further adds:

"Woe to those whose hearts are so hardened and impenetrable that they may not be affected by remembrance of Allah."

Neither fruitful admonitions, nor good tidings, nor warnings, nor moving Qur'anic Verses, nor life giving rain of Divine Revelation may cause flowers of fearing God and piety grow in their hearts. In other words, they have neither freshness, nor leaves, nor flowers, nor shade!

Such people

"are in plain error."

The word qasiya is taken from qaswa indicating coarseness, uncouthness, and impenetrability and the word qasi is applied to rough stones.

Likewise, the word is applied to hard hearts unaffected by Divine Light and Guidance.

The expression is employed as the opposite of "extension of mind" and openness of heart, since extension and openness alludes to preparation for acceptance. A desert or a spacious mansion may accommodate more people and likewise, an opened mind and broad breast may accept more realities.

According to a report narrated by Ibn Mas'ud, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) was asked concerning the interpretation of the Verse,

"In what manner man may attain to extension of mind?"

the Noble Prophet replied:

"When Light penetrates into human heart, it broadens in extent and returns."

He was again inquired regarding the tokens thereof, to which he replied:

"The tokens include attentiveness toward the everlasting abode, separation from the abode of vanity, and preparation for welcoming death prior to its occurrence."[24]

According to the exegetic work by 'Ali ibn Ibrahim,

"Is he whose breast Allah has opened to [***convert to***] ***Islam, so that he is*** [***alighted on***] ***light from His Lord*** [***like someone entangled with bias, obduracy, and vanity***]***?"***

is revealed for the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as).

As per some Qur'anic exegetic works,

"So woe to those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of Allah"

is addressed to Abu Lahab and his offspring.[25]

It is worthy of note that Light in

"[***alighted on***] ***light from His Light"***

is expressed such that it reminds one of a mount on which believers are alighted on it whose speed is extraordinary, whose path is bright, and whose rigor encompasses the world over.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 23

اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَاباً مُتَشَابِهاً مَثَانِيَ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

23. Allah has sent down the Best Statement, a Book whose [***Verses***] ***resemble each other. The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from*** [***its recitation***]***. Then their skin and their heart soften to the remembrance of Allah*** [***through faith and intimacy***]***. That is Divine Guidance. He Guides therewith whom He wills and whosoever Allah sends astray*** [***because of his disobeying Him***]***, for him there is no guide.***

The word:

hadith

is employed in the sense of "word, statement."

In the blessed Verse in question, it makes a reference to the Holy Qur'an which is the Best Statement, since it embraces comprehensiveness, eloquence, and firmness.

The word:

mutashabih (*"similar; polysemous; equivocal"*)

is per se polysemous, since some of the Verses are equivocal as opposed to the clear and unequivocal Ones.

According to a Verse in Chapter three,

"They [***constitute***] ***the Mother of the Book and others*** [***are***] ***equivocal";***

however, the word mutashabih in this Verse implies the similarity of Qur'anic Verses and it is employed as an adjective modifying all the Verses.

The word:

mathani

is the plural form of mathniya ("inclination, tendency") indicating the proximity of Qur'anic Verses such that some of which interpret some others; in other words, the same meaning may be found in different forms.

It is noteworthy that the preceding Verses treated of God's servants who listen to the words and select the best of them and also mention was made of open breasts and broadened minds prepared to embrace Divine Word.

In the same vein, the blessed Verse in question makes mention of the Holy Qur'an in order to complete the foregoing discussions concerning Divine Unity and Resurrection substantiated with arguments put forward for the veracity of prophethood.

The Verse opens with:

"Allah has sent down the Best Statement, a Book whose [***Verses***] ***resemble each other."***

It further proceeds with an enumeration of the merits of the Holy Qur'an among which three merits of this Glorious Divine Book is mentioned:

"a Book whose [***Verses***] ***resemble each other."***

The word mutashabih ad hoc refers to a statement whose constituent elements are consistent and harmonious, in which neither inconsistency nor discrepancy may be found, but one is better than the other.

Furthermore, another characteristic of this Book is that it is oft-repeated (mathani). The expression may allude to the reiteration of different topics mentioned in the stories and admonitions, but they are never

boring, rather they are enthusing and invigorating.

It is one of the fundamental principles of eloquence that as required, a point may be reiterated in a novel and interesting manner for a more profound impression in the audience.

Besides, the reiteration of Qur'anic themes help to interpret each other and may thus provide answers to many a question. Some maintain that it makes a reference to the reiteration in reciting the Holy Qur'an and the fact that Qur'anic Verses never lose their freshness through repetition.

Some also make a reference to the Revelation of the Qur'an once at one single time on the Night of Decree (laylat al-qadr) and also at different times within a period of 23 years. It is also possible that the reiteration of the Qur'anic Truth at any time and a novel manifestation of the same out of occultation refer to the passage of time.

The first interpretation sounds more preferable; however the foregoing interpretations are not inconsistent, rather they complement each other.

Furthermore, the Verse proceeds toward an exposition of the last characteristics of the Holy Qur'an, namely Its extraordinary and profound impression, saying:

"The skins of those who fear their Lord shiver from [***its recitation***]***. Then their skin and their heart soften to the remembrance of Allah*** [***through faith and intimacy***]***."***

This is an elegant depiction of the unusual impression caused by Qur'anic Verses in welcoming hearts that causes fear and awe in the first place which leads to awakening and beginning of motion. Such fear makes man attend to his different obligations.

It is in the second place that he attains to flexibility and welcoming the Word of Truth leading to peace of mind.

The two fold state demonstrating different stages of:

"treading the Path toward Allah"

which is quite understandable.

The blessed Verses revealing Divine Wrath and warning the Noble Prophet (S) make the hearts shiver which are followed by the Verses designating Divine Mercy and thus leading to peace of mind. Reflection upon the Essence of Truth and the Pre-eternality and Infiniteness of His Pure Essence causes fear in his heart as to the manner through which He may be known, but pondering on the Signs of the Sacred Essence in the horizons and souls bestows peace of mind on him.[26]

The history of Islam abounds in instances of the extraordinary impression of the Holy Qur'an in the hearts of both believers and non-believers whose hearts were prepared to welcome It and such unusual

impression bears witness to the Divine Revelation of this Holy Book.

According to a tradition narrated on the authority of Asma',

"Upon the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, the Companions of the Prophet (***S***) ***wept and shuddered in awe."***[27]

Regarding the pious, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) makes an exposition of such truth in the best possible manner:

"Those stand in prayer at night time, recite the Holy Qur'an in a meditative and clearly enunciated manner, immerse their souls in it in a pleasing sadness, seek the cure of their pain in it; whenever they come unto any encouraging Verse, they set their hopes on it and the eyes of their hearts gaze at it in astonishment and they set it as their example, and when they come unto One in which there are warning and inspiration of awe, they listen to them wholeheartedly, as if they the moans and the flames of the awe inspiring Hell fire echo in their hearts."

The blessed Verse closes thus:

"That is Divine Guidance. He Guides therewith whom He wills and whosoever Allah sends astray [***because of his disobeying Him***]***, for him there is no guide."***

It is true that the Holy Qur'an is revealed for the Guidance of all, but truth seekers and the pious may solely benefit from the Light of Its Guidance.

Those whose hearts are intentionally sealed and the shadows of bias and obduracy dominates their souls not only may not benefit from It, but also owing to their obduracy and enmity, they sink further in error.

Thus the Verse proceeds with:

"He Guides therewith whom He wills and whosoever Allah sends astray [***because of his disobeying Him***]***, for him there is no guide."***

Such error is owing to their own deeds springing from their will and it is in no way inconsistent with the human free will.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 24

أَفَمَنْ يَتَّقِي بِوَجْهِهِ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَقِيلَ لِلظَّالِمِينَ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ

24. Is he then who will confronts with his face the awful torment on the Day of Resurrection

[*through faith and righteous good deeds on a par with one who neglects Divine Wrath on the Day of Resurrection*]*? And* [*on that Day*] *it will be said to the wrong doers*]*: "Taste what you used to ear!"*

The fruit of fearing God Almighty is to turn his face away from Divine Wrath on the Day of Resurrection. The blessed Verse in question compares wrong doers and sinners with the believers whose state has been already mention so that such comparison shed more light on realities.

The Verse in question asks:

"Is he who turns away with his face the excruciating Divine torment on a par with the one who is secure on that Day and Hell fire never touches him?"

It is noteworthy that the Verse says:

"confronts with his face the awful torment."

The word face is used in this expression since it is one of the most organs of the body and the significant human sources, i.e., vision, hearing, smell, and taste, are in it and human beings are basically recognized through their faces; that is why they try to shield their hands, arms, and other organs against it to save it from perils.

However, the wrong doing people of Hell have to defend themselves with their faces, as their hands and feet are in fetters and shackles as mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[28]:

"Indeed We have put on their necks iron collars [***in which their hands are also laid***] ***reaching to the chins, so that their heads are raised up."***

Some have maintained that the expression indicates that they will be cast into Fire on their faces, so that their first organ touching the fire will be their faces, as it is mentioned in 27:90,

"And whoever brings an evil deed, they will be cast down on their faces in the Fire."

It is also held that the expression solely implies their inability to save themselves from Hell fire. The three interpretations are not inconsistent and they may all be comprehended from the contextual content of the Verse.

The blessed Verse further adds:

"And it will be said to wrong doers: 'Taste what you used to earn!'"

Angels responsible for inflicting torment inform them of the excruciating reality that the torment is the consequence of what you used to earn. Now they embrace and hurt you and the expression per se is another mental torment for them.

It is worthy of note that the Verse does not say: “*Taste the consequences of your deeds,*” but it says:

“Taste your deeds”

which is another piece of evidence for

“embodiment of deeds.”

Surah al-Zumar – Verses 25 – 26

كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَأَتَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لا يَشْعُرُونَ

فَأَذَاقَهُمُ اللَّهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

25. Those before them belied and so the torment came on them from directions they perceived not.
26. Therefore, Allah made them to taste the disgrace in the present life, but greater is the torment of the Hereafter if they only knew!

The history of disbelievers and tyrants is a lesson for future generations. The foregoing discussions made a reference in passing to the excruciating torments of disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection; however, the blessed Verse in question treats of their torments in this world, lest they may imagine that they are secure in their mundane life.

In this vein, the blessed Verse says:

“Those before them belied and so the torment came on them from directions they perceived not.”

Expected blows are less excruciating than unexpected ones, e.g. those from the most intimate friends, the most beloved means of life, from the water which is the source of his life, from the gentle breeze which invigorating, and from the serene land which is his abode and place of rest and security. Such Divine torments are very excruciating.

The accounts of the peoples of Noah, ‘Ad, Thamud, Lot, Pharaoh, and Qarun (Korah) reveal that they were inflicted with quite unexpected torments.

Verse 26 indicates that their mundane torment was solely corporeal but they were inflicted with mental chastisement as well,

“Allah made them to taste the disgrace in the present life.”

It is not an issue when someone is inflicted with a hardship but he manages to save himself honorably, rather the hardship lies in falling a victim to torments disgracefully,

“but greater is the torment of the Hereafter if they only knew!”

The word greater (akbar) designates the severity of the torment.

According to a Prophetic tradition narrated on the authority of ‘Abbas, the Noble Prophet’s (S) paternal uncle,

“Upon shuddering with fear of God, a servant is absolved of his sins in the same manner that withered leaves fall from the trees.”[29]

It is evident that one who is so affected out of fear of God that leads him to repentance shall be certainly forgiven by God Almighty.

As mentioned above, it is narrated from Asma’ that upon being asked of the Prophet’s (S) Companions, the answer provided is that as mentioned in the Holy Qur’an, upon hearing or reciting the Verses, tears ran from their eyes and their bodies shuddered with fear.

The transmitter asked Asma’ concerning those who faint upon hearing Qur’anic Verses and they fall into a state of ecstasy, to which the latter replies:

“I seek refuge in God Almighty from Satan.”[30]

The tradition is actually a decisive critique of Sufi pretenders who convene sessions in which Qur’anic Verses and certain prayers are being recited and bodily movements lead them to ecstasy as a consequence of which they shout and pretend to swoon and some of them may really faint; nonetheless, such states are not reported from the Noble Prophet’s (S) Companions but they are Sufi innovations.

It is worthy of note that at times, one may faint out of awe and fear of God, but it is quite different from Sufi activities in aforementioned prayer sessions.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 27-28

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

قُرْآناً عَرَبِيّاً غَيْرَ ذِي عِوَجٍ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ

27. And indeed We have put forth for [the Guidance of] man, in this Qur’an every kind of similitude in order that they may remember.

28. An Arabic [***and eloquent***] ***Qur'an, without any crookedness in order that they may fear God.***

Guiding and reminding men of their duties, through producing arguments or similitude, is of significance.

The Holy Qur'an includes:

"every kind of similitude"

for reminding him of his obligations and making him to avoid neglectfulness.

Ordinary people

(***"for man"***)

are more prone to be impressed by similitude rather than argument.

Proceeding with the aforementioned discussions, the blessed Verse in question mainly treats of the Holy Qur'an and Its characteristics.

Mention is made in the first place of the question of the comprehensiveness of the Holy Qur'an:

"And indeed We have put for [***the Guidance of***] ***man, in this Qur'an every kind of similitude in order that they may remember."***

The Divine Book includes the excruciating fates of the disobedient and tyrants in the past, the dire consequences of sinfulness, every admonition, secrets of creation and its systematicity, clear and precise Laws and Injunctions, and whatever is required for man's guidance in the form of similitude

"in order that they may remember"

and return to the Straight Path. It is worthy of note that the Arabic word mathal is applied to any word that embodies a truth, depicts something, or likens something to something else.

The expression includes all the facts and points included in the Holy Qur'an and specifies Its comprehensiveness.

Verse 28 provides another depiction of the Holy Qur'an saying:

"An Arabic [***and eloquent***] ***Qur'an, without any crookedness."***

Three characteristics are being enumerated herein. Firstly, the expression Qur'an-an makes a reference to the fact that Qur'anic Verses are being recited at all times in daily prayers and otherwise, in solitude and in assemblies, and throughout the history of Islam to the end of the world; such that It is an ever illuminating Light of Guidance.

The other point is the eloquence, elegance, and impressiveness of the Divine Word expressed by the word:

"Arabic" (***'Arabiy-yan***)***,***

since the word is ad hoc employed in the sense of "eloquent."

Some philologists and exegets maintain that ***'iwaj*** and 'awaj are applied to inward and outward crookedness respectively, an instance of which is to found elsewhere in the Qur'an[31]:

"You will see in it [***i.e., plain***] ***nothing crooked or curved,"***

as a consequence of which a number of philologists consider the former interpretation to be general.[32]

It is noteworthy that the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an with so many characteristics is that man may fear God and be pious.

The other point worthy of note is that the penultimate Verse closes with:

"in order that they may remember,"

where as the last One ends in:

"in order that they may fear God."

The reason is that Remembrance at all times is a prelude to fear of God; in other words, the latter is the fruit of the former.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 29

ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلاً رَجُلاً فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ مُتَشَاكِسُونَ وَرَجُلاً سَلَماً لِرَجُلٍ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلاً الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

29. Allah puts forth a similitude [***for Divine Unity and polytheism***]***: a*** [***slave***] ***man belonging to many partners disputing with one another*** [***giving him contradictory orders***]***, and a*** [***slave***] ***man belonging entirely to one master*** [***taking his orders solely from him***]***. Are those two equal in comparison? All the praises and laudations are to Allah! But most of people know not.***

Monotheists are preoccupied with the satisfaction of the One God, whereas polytheists are preoccupied at all times with the satisfaction of different gods.

It is not ill-advised to illustrate examples concerning God in religious discussions, since the blessed Verse in question uses a similitude to liken total submission to God to a slave's obedience to his master:

(***“belonging entirely to one master”***).

The Verse is saying that all individuals and paths besides God lead to contradiction and inconsistency, since every man is to his taste and desire:

(***“many partners disputing with one another”***).

Thus the Holy Qur’an illustrates the fates of polytheists and monotheists by employment of the similitude as per which a slave belongs to several masters each of whom order him to do something and the point is that the orders are contradictory.

Therefore, the slave is perplexed as to which order is supposed to be acted upon. To add insult to injury, each and every master asks the other to meet the slave’s demands and the latter is perplexed, miserable, and destitute.

Au contraire, mention is made of a man obedient to one single person:

(***“a man belonging entirely to one master”***)

whose master and orders to be taken and carried out are specifically clear. He is neither in doubt, nor perplexity, nor contradiction; rather he takes his steps calmly and confidently, since he is under the guardianship of one single person who supports him anywhere and anytime.

“Are those two equal in comparison?”

Such are the states of polytheists and monotheists. The former are entangled with every contradiction and inconsistency.

Each and every day they set their hearts on an object of worship and turn toward different masters at all times. They lack in peace of mind, security, and a clear path to tread.

Au contraire, the latter set their hearts on God, select Him from the entire world, and seek refuge in His Boundless Mercy. They have turned away from all beings besides God and are totally obedient to Him. Their path is straight and evident and their fate is clear.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as) he says

“I am the man who was totally obedient to the Messenger of God (S) at all times.”

It is narrated in another tradition:

“The men who were actually obedient were ‘Ali (as) and his adherents.”

The Verse closes with:

"All the praises and laudations are to Allah!"

God Almighty illustrates such examples to beacon the Path. He produces clear arguments to draw a distinction between Truth and falsehood. He calls every one to sincere devotion leading to security and peace of mind.

It is the most exalted Bounty that requires praise and laudation.

"But most of people know not,"

in other words, despite such clear arguments, some people are preoccupied with mundane possessions and unchecked vain desires such that they may not find their way to Truth.

1. Majma' al-Bayan, the opening of the Chapter.
2. Majma' al-Bayan; Thawab al-A'mal; Nur al-Thiqalayn.
3. Ruh al-Ma'ani [Exegesis], vol. 23, p. 212, under the blessed Verses in question.
4. Surah al-Hamd or Surah al-Fatiha
5. 35:13
6. 7:54
7. 14:33
8. Tafsir Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question.
9. 3:198
10. The 'Arafa Prayer, see Misbah al-Za'ir by Ibn Óawus.
11. For further information, see the exegesis of 17:15.
12. For further information, see the exegesis of 6:94.
13. See Lisan al-'Arab; Raghib's Mufradat; the Exegetic work titled Ruh al-Ma'ani.
14. Apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 479.
15. Kafi, vol. 1, Bab Sifat al-'Ilm wa Fadlihi ("The Chapter on the Characteristics of Knowledge and its Exellence") Tradition 7.
16. Ibid, Tradition 2.
17. Majma' al-Bayan [Exegesis], under the Verses in question.
18. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 496, the section on accounts of Kumayl.
19. 4:97
20. For further discussions concerning the significance of emigration in Islam and its different dimensions, see the Holy Qur'an 4:100; 8:72.
21. 29:55
22. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verses in question.
23. 38:85
24. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5691, exegesis of Chapter 39, under the Verses in question.
25. Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
26. The word taqsha'iru ("he has gooseflesh with fear") derives from qusha'rira ("having gooseflesh with fear, shudder"), see Raghib's Mufradat; Lisan al-'Arab; Tafsir Kashshaf; Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Qurtubi.
27. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5693.
28. 36:8
29. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verses in question. Abu al-Futuh Razi and Qurtubi have transmitted the Prophetic tradition with minor variations.
30. Àlusi, Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 23, p. 235.

31. 20:107
32. Raghib's Mufradat.

Surah al-Zumar, Verses 30 - 55

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 30 - 31

إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَيِّتُونَ

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ

30. Verily you will die and indeed they will die [***too***].
31. Then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will be disputing before your Lord.

Prophets are like ordinary people in their daily life. Being a Favorite [of God] may not hinder the execution of Divine Ordainments like death:

(***"Verily you will die"***).

Proceeding with the foregoing discussion on monotheism and polytheism, the blessed Verse in question treats of the consequences of monotheism and polytheism on the Day of Resurrection.

The Verse begins with the question of death, the gate to Resurrection, and treats of the general applicability of the law to all humanity, saying:

"you will die and they will die too."

Death is one of the questions as to which all men are alike. That is the way of all the flesh. There is neither any exception nor any difference in death.

"You will die and they will die"

apparently indicates the death of everyone in the present tense, but is in the real present tense that is at times used in the senses of past and present. Some exegets maintain that the Noble Prophet's (S) foes awaited his death and were happy that he would die some day.

The Holy Qur'an raises a question to them,

“Put the case that he dies, will you be stay alive?”

Verse 31 treats of the Last Judgment depicting servants’ disputations on the Day of Resurrection, saying:

“Then on the Day of Resurrection, you will be disputing before your Lord.”

The verbal form:

takhtasimun **(*“they dispute”*)**

is taken from ikhtisam denoting “disputation” between two individuals or two groups, each of whom makes attempts at the nullification of the words of the other; in which case, either or both of them may err, an instance of which is the disputations of the people in error.

Exegets differ as to the generality of the issue, some of whom maintain that the disputation in question concerns Muslims and disbelievers, but some also hold that the disputation may be between Muslims and the people of their tribes.

In this vein, a tradition is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa’id Khudri to the effect that Muslims contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) could never imagine that disputations might occur between Muslims holding that they share the same Creator and religion.

It was on the Day of Siffin that two apparently Muslim parties waged war against each other that Abu Sa’id learned that the Verse concerns them as well.[1]

Nonetheless, the following Verses demonstrate that the disputation occurred between the Noble Prophet (S) and believers on the one hand and the polytheists and liars on the other.

It is well known in the history of Islam that following the sad demise of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), ‘Umar denied his death saying that the Prophet (S) might not die but he had gone to his Lord in the same manner that Moses had been in occultation away from his people for forty days but had returned to them.

Likewise, the Messenger of God (S) would return and the hands and feet of those believing in his death was to be severed! Upon hearing the news, Abu Bakr went to him and recited a number of the Qur’anic Verses concerning the demise of the Prophet (S) as a consequence of which ‘Umar became silent and said that it was the first time that he heard them.[2]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 32

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِباً أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوىً لِلْكَافِرِينَ

32. Then, who does more wrong than one who utters a lie against Allah, and denies the truth when it [***i.e., the truth***] ***comes to him? Is there not in Hell an abode for disbelievers?***

The word

“truth” (***sidq***)

in the blessed Verse indicates Divine Word Revealed to the Prophet (S) as the Holy Qur’an.

The preceding Verses treated of people on the Day of Judgment and disputations occurring then.

The Verse in question resumes the same discussion dividing people into

“the lying”

and

“the trustworthy.”

The former have two characteristics as reflected in the Qur’anic Verse in question:

“Then, who does more wrong than one who utters a lie against Allah, and denies the truth when it [***i.e., the truth***] ***comes to him?”***

Polytheists and disbelievers uttered many a lie concerning God; for instance, some regarded angels His daughters, some others regarded Jesus (as) his son, some considered idols as intercessors interceding on their behalf, and some others forged false injunctions as to lawfulness and unlawfulness.

Nonetheless, when the Truth, i.e., the Holy Qur’an Revealed to the Prophet (S), came unto them, they denied It.

The Verse closes with a brief clause demonstrating the retribution of these people:

“Is there not in Hell an abode for disbelievers?”

It is worthy of note that the word ***mathwa*** is taken from thawa’ which indicates “residence, residing, abiding,” hence the former ad hoc designates permanent abode or residence.

Hell embodies all its excruciating torments.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 33 - 35

وَالَّذِي جَاءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ

لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

لِيُكَفِّرَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

33. And he who brought the Truth and believed therein, those are the God fearing.
34. They shall have all that they will desire with their Lord. That is the reward of good doers.
35. So that Allah [***thanks to their faith and sincerity***] ***may expiate from them the evil of what they did and give them the reward, according to the best of what they used to do.***

One of Divine Favors is that He expiates from sinners the evil of what they did and gives them rewards in the best manner.

Two characteristics are also mentioned for believers:

"And he who brought the Truth and believed therein, those are the God fearing."

The clause

"And he who brought the Truth"

is interpreted in a number of traditions narrated from Shi'i Imams as a reference to Imam 'Ali (as).[3]

However, it is worthy of note that the blessed Verse presents clear pieces of evidence, since the clause:

"They are the God fearing"

indicates the general applicability of the Verse. It bears testimony to the fact that the interpretation of the Verse in question to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), as the bearer of Divine Revelation and believer in It is an instance of the applicability (bayan misdaq) of the contextual meaning of the Verse rather than the meaning thereof in Its entirety.

Consequently, some exegets interpret the clause:

"he who brought the Truth"

to be applicable to all prophets and hold that:

"believed in it"

designates the true believers of them who are all the God fearing of the world.

Another interpretation of the Verse in question which is the most comprehensive, though more or less neglected by exegets despite the fact that it is more consistent with the outward meaning of the Verses,

is that:

“he who brought the Truth”

does not solely refer to the bearers of Divine Revelation, i.e., the prophets, rather it is addressed to all those who disseminated their teachings as the Words of Truth.

Therefore, both clauses may refer to the same group, as reflected by the outward interpretation of the Verse, since:

“And he who”

is mentioned solely once.

Thus, the Verse treats both the bearers of Truth and those acting upon the same. It is concerned with the disseminators of Divine Revelation and True Word and they, i.e., prophets, the Infallible Imams and promulgators of their teachings, believe in and act upon the same.

It is noteworthy that

“Truth”

designates “Revelation,” making a reference to the fact that they only word which is not subject to inconsistency and contradiction is Divine Word Revealed to prophets.

Furthermore, fearing God Almighty may flourish in hearts through believing in prophetic teachings and acting upon them. The next Verse enumerates three great rewards for such believers.

Firstly, it says:

“They shall have all that they will desire with their Lord. That is the reward of good doers.”

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is so comprehensive that It includes all this worldly and otherworldly Bounties some of which may be unimaginable.

It is worthy of note to keep in mind that the Rewards of the Hereafter and Divine Bounties shall be bestowed upon servants as per the merits they accrue in this world.

The expression:

“with their Lord”

expresses Divine Boundless Favors granted to them as if they are His guests for good and may request whatever they require.

In

“That is the reward of good doers”

the present participial form:

muhsinin (***“good doers”***)

is employed in lieu of demonstrative pronoun to make a reference to the fact that the main reason behind the bestowal of such Rewards is their good doing.

Verse 35 treats of the second and the third characteristics granted to good doers:

“So that Allah [***thanks to their faith and sincerity***] ***may expiate from them the evil of what they did and give them the reward, according to the best of what they used to do.”***

The expression is worthy of note. On the one hand, they expect that the worst of their deeds be expiated thanks to Divine Mercy such that they may be absolved of them and on the other hand they pray to God Almighty to regard their best of deeds as the standard of according Rewards to them and accept all their deeds accordingly!

It is evident in the Verse that God Almighty accepts their request, namely, He forgives the worst and regards the best as the standard of granting Rewards. It is to be noted that when worse faults are to be forgiven by Divine Mercy, other faults will be reckoned accordingly.

The point in question is that man is more concerned by worse faults as a consequence of which believers are more preoccupied with it.

Now a question arises: Who was the first believer? Many a Shi’i and Sunni exegets have reported a tradition concerning the interpretation of:

“he who brought the Truth and believed therein”

according to which:

“he who brought the Truth”

indicates the Noble Prophet (S) and

“[***he who believed therein***]***”***

refers to ‘Ali (as).

Eminent exegets, Tabarsi in Majma’ al-Bayan and Abu al-Futuh Razi in Rawh al-Jananhave narrated the tradition from the Prophet’s Household (Ahl al-Bayt).

However, a number of Sunni scholars and exegets, e.g. ‘Allama Ibn Maghazili in Manaqib, ‘Allama Ganji in Kifayat al-Matalib, Qurtubi in his Tafsir [“Exegesis”], ‘Allama Suyuti in Durr al-Manthur, and Alusi in Ruh al-Ma’ani,4 narrate the Prophetic tradition from Abu Hurayra and or other transmitters.

As mentioned above, such interpretations are included for referring to the most evident instances and indubitably, ‘Ali (as) is the first person to believe in the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). He is the first believer.

It is to be noted that all Muslim scholars unanimously believe that from amongst men, ‘Ali (as) was the first who converted to the Islamic faith and he is many a time mentioned by the Noble Prophet (S) as the

“first believer”

or “the first one who converted to the Islamic faith,” the references of which were mentioned above under 9:10.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 36 - 37

أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهُ وَيُخَوِّفُونَكَ بِالَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

وَمَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ مُضِلٍّ أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِعَزِيزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ

36. Is not Allah Sufficient for His servant? Yet they try to frighten you with those besides Him! And whom Allah sends astray, for him there will be no guide.
37. And whomsoever Allah guides, for him there will be no misleader. Is not Allah the Omnipotent, the Lord of Retribution?

God’s servants are secure from evils since God is their guardian, as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus (as) were protected from drowning, fire, Pharaoh, and crucifixion.

Many an exeget hold that Meccan idolaters warned the Prophet (S) against their idols lest that he may be harmed or possessed by them! The occasion of the Revelation of the Verse is the reply to their warnings.5

Resuming the discussion of the Divine Threats against polytheists as well as the Promises to His Prophet (S) mentioned the preceding Verses, the Verses in question treat of disbelievers’ threats saying:

“Is not Allah Sufficient for His servant? Yet they try to frighten you with those besides Him!”

God is the Omnipotent, All-Aware of His servants’ needs and difficulties, and is All-Merciful toward them. How could He abandon his faithful servants in the face of vicissitudes and enmities?

When He supports His servants,

"even if the swords of the world happen to be wielding, no one shall be harmed against His Will."

Likewise, when He Wills to assist someone,

"even if a thousand enemies intend to destroy me, I shall not entertain fear when Your are my Friend,"

let alone idols which are devoid of any power whatsoever.

According to the aforementioned tradition, the occasion for the Revelation of the Verse in question is the Meccan disbelievers warning to the Prophet (S) against the wrath of the idols; however, the contextual meaning of the Verse is so inclusive that It includes any kind of threat against those besides God.

It is to be noted that the Verse in question is a good tiding to all those treading the Path of Truth particularly sincere believers residing in places where they are considered as minorities and are subject to perils from all sides.

The Verse is a source of consolation, encouragement, and perseverance to them invigorating their souls, and refreshing them with determination. It neutralizes the harmful mental impressions and the menaces of their foes. Through Divine Support, we are not frightened by any one besides Him. When we distance ourselves from Him, everything inspires awe in our hearts.

Verses 36 and 37 treat of the questions of Guidance and error, division of people into the two groups of astray and guided, and the fact that these are within His Omnipotence.

He Wills that the entire world comprehend that all His servants need His Threshold. Nothing occurs in this world without His Will, saying:

"And whom Allah sends astray, for him there will be no guide."
"And whomsoever Allah guides, for him there will be no misleader."

It is evident that neither the error nor the Guidance is groundless, rather either of the twain is the fruit of human will and endeavor.

God Almighty misleads one who is in error, leaves no stone unturned to extinguish the Light of Truth, makes any attempt to deceive others, and is deep in sinfulness and rebellion.

God Almighty causes his defeat, renders his understanding and distinction useless, seals his heart, and casts a veil on his eyes, as the Retribution of his evil deeds.

Those sincere devout believers aiming to tread the Path toward Allah who have made the necessary preparations for the same and have taken the first steps in that direction, the Light of Divine Guidance renders them assistance, angels of Truth come to their succor absolving their hearts of satanic

temptations, strengthen their will, and make them firmer in taking steps on the true path, and Divine Mercy protects them in precipices.

These questions are treated in many a Qur'anic Verses. Those failing to perceive the interrelation existing between such Verses with others are so ignorant that they consider them as arguments substantiating the school of predestination, as if they are unaware of the fact that Qur'anic Verses interpret each other.

An evident piece of evidence is to be found in the Verse in question:

"Is not Allah the Omnipotent, the Lord of Retribution?"

It is well known that Divine Retribution aims at chastisement of wrong doing, indicating that misleading the wrong doer is the chastisement for human deeds and His Guidance is the Reward of the sincere deeds and struggles on the Path toward Allah.[6]

Guidance is divided into beaconing the path and attaining to the object of desire, in other words, legislative (tashri'i) and existential (takwini) Guidance.

It is noteworthy that at times one may show the seeker the way with total precision and wholehearted benevolence, but it will be incumbent upon the seeker to proceed on the path and attain to his goal.

However, at times one may take the hand of the seeker and accompany him on the path till he attains to his goal.

In other words, the guide in the former case merely suffices to inform the seeker of the laws, the conditions of proceeding on the path, and the manner of attainment to the goal, but in the latter case prepares the required means for the journey, removes the obstacles, unravels the intricacies to be met en route, and renders the wayfarers accompaniment and support until they attain to their destination.

It is to be noted that the most precise and the best interpretation consistent with all the Qur'anic Verses concerning Guidance and error is that legislative Guidance in the sense of beaconing the Right Path is unconditional and of general applicability, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

***"Verily, We showed him the way whether he be grateful or ungrateful"* (*76:3*), *"Verily, You guide them to the Straight Path"*[7].**

It is needless to say that the Noble Prophet's (S) Call represents Divine Call since he is Divinely appointed to prophethood.

According to another Qur'anic Verse:

"Wherewith Allah guides all those who seek His Good Pleasure to ways of peace and He brings them out of darkness by His Will unto light and guides them to the Straight Path"[8].

In this blessed Verse, obedience to Divine Command and seeking His Satisfaction paves the path for Divine Guidance.

Regarding some polytheists and those in error another Qur'anic Verse[9] says:

"There has surely come to them the Guidance from their Lord [***but they failed to believe***]***!"***

It is said elsewhere[10],

"Allah guides not the wrong doing people."

In the last Verse, emphasis is laid on wrong doing leading to error.

The Holy Qur'an elsewhere[11] refers to disbelief as the cause of error:

"Allah does not guide the disbelieving people."

Lying and disbelief have also been mentioned as the sources of error[12]:

"Truly, Allah guides not him who is a liar and a disbeliever."

According to another Qur'anic Verse,

"Allah guides not one who is a transgressor, a liar!". [13]

In other words, transgression of bounds and lying lead to error. It is to be noted that the aforementioned themes abound in many a Qur'anic Verse. In short, the Holy Qur'an considers certain characteristics, e.g. disbelief, wrong doing, vice, lying, transgression of bounds, prodigality, and ingratitude as leading to error.

Are not such people worthy of being in error? Shadows and veils conceal the hearts of people with such characteristics. In any case, such deeds and conducts lead to undesirable consequences, cast a veil on man's eyes, ears, and intellect leading him to error.

Since the qualities of all things and the effects of all means are subject to Divine Will, such error in all cases may be attributed to God; however, such attribution is consistent with His servants' free will. Divine Will on which emphasis is laid in the Verses concerning with Guidance and error by no means indicate unfounded and unwise Will, but there are certain conditions in each and every instance consistent with Divine Wisdom.

According to a Qur'anic Verse,

"And He it is Who accepts repentance from His servants and forgives sins and He knows what you do"[14]

in which acts are attributed to servants rather than to His Sacred Essence. Therefore, there is no predestination. Hopefully, the above discussions have shed light on the issues.

Surah al-Zumar – Verse 38

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلْ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَنِيَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كَاشِفَاتُ ضُرِّهِ أَوْ أَرَادَنِي بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكَاتُ رَحْمَتِهِ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُونَ

38. And indeed if you ask them: "Who created the heavens and the earth?" Surely they will say: "Allah." Say: "Tell me then, [***Have you thought about***] ***the things that you invoke besides Allah?*** [***Indeed***] ***if Allah intended some harm for me, could they remove His harm? Or if He intended some Mercy for me, could they withhold His Mercy?" Say: "Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him those who trust must put their trust."***

Idolaters believed in God's creativity but also believed in idol's lordship and intercession. The blessed Verse in question says that one who deserves to be worshipped is supposed to be able to intend assistance or harm for others.

The preceding Verses treated of disbelievers' and polytheists' errors and their evil consequences. The Verse in question deals with the arguments for Divine Unity to produce further arguments in order to complete the discussion.

The foregoing Verses concerned with the sufficiency of Divine Succor and the same is resumed in this Verse and it is accompanied with arguments. The Verse opens with the question:

"If you ask them: 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' Surely they will say: 'Allah.'"

It would be unwise to believe that such immense world be created by an earthly being let alone by inanimate idols devoid of understanding.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an asks them to make use of their intellect, conscience, and primordial disposition in order to reinforce in their hearts the first pivot of Divine Unity which is the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Then, mention is made of the question of assistance and harm in human affairs to substantiate the fact that idols play no role therein, saying:

"Say: 'Tell me then, [***Have you thought about***] ***the things*** [***i.e., objects of worship***] ***that you invoke besides Allah?*** [***Indeed***] ***if Allah intended some harm for me, could they remove His harm? Or if He intended some Mercy for me, could they withhold His Mercy?' Say: 'Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him those who trust must put their trust.'"***

Now that they are neither creators nor are they able to render assistance or harm, their worship is meaningless.

Why do you turn away from the Originator of the creation of the world within His Control lie any assistance and harm and resort to such beings that are devoid of capability and understanding?

Even if objects of worship happen to possess understanding, e.g. jinn and angels worshipped by some idolaters, they are neither creators nor have they any control over assistance and harm.

In this vein, the blessed Verse in question presents a general and final conclusion saying:

"Sufficient for me is Allah. In Him those who trust must put their trust."

The belief held by polytheists as to the creation of the sky and the earth by God is oft-repeated in the Holy Qur'an[15].

It indicates that they firmly believed in it and the same serves as the best argument against polytheism, since monotheistic Creatorship, Lordship, and Sovereignty in the world of existence is the best argument for monotheistic servantship which leads to trust in Divine Pure Essence and turning away from all entities besides Him.

It is also worthy of note that the pronouns whose antecedents are false objects of worship and also the plural forms denoting the same are all feminine in gender

(***hunna "them*** [***feminine***]***;"***
kashifat "remover [***feminine***]***;"***
mumsikat "withholder [***feminine***]***"***)***.***

It is worthy of note that firstly, well known idols worshipped by Arabs bore feminine names (e.g. Lat, Manat, and 'Uzza) since they believed in the weakness of the fair sex and God Almighty intends to reveal the weakness of the idols as per their own beliefs; secondly, many an object of worship were inanimate and feminine plural forms have been used at times for inanimate objects as mentioned in the blessed Verse in question.

It is also worthy of note that owing to the precedence of

'alayh (***"in"***)***,***

the clause:

"In Him those who trust must put their trust"

indicates limitation and restriction (hasr), i.e., those who put trust solely rely on Him.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 39 - 40

قُلْ يَا قَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَى مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ

مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَيَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ

39. Say: "O my people! Act upon your stance [***and position or authority***]***. I*** [***also***] ***act upon mine. Then you will come to know.***
40. to whom comes a disgracing torment [***of this world***] ***and on whom descends an everlasting torment*** [***of Resurrection***]***."***

Believing in Allah and putting trust in Him leads one to adopt a stance against enemies; therefore, a leader is supposed to act decisively and kindheartedly.

The blessed Verses in question reveal a Divine and effective warning to those failing to submit to intellect and conscience by saying:

"O my people! Act upon your stance [***and position or authority***]***. I*** [***also***] ***act upon mine. Then you will come to know."***

Verse 40 informs them as to who will be afflicted with a disgracing torment in this world and the everlasting torment in the world to come;

(***"to whom comes a disgracing torment*** [***of this world***] ***and on whom descends an everlasting torment*** [***of Resurrection***]***"***).

Thus, He asks them to either submit to your intellect and conscience or await two excruciating torments, one in this world which is disgracing and another in the Hereafter which is everlasting. These are the torments caused by you and the fire for making which you have collected firewood.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 41

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَى فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

41. Indeed We have sent down unto you [***for your Guidance***] ***the Book*** [***the Holy Qur'an***] ***for mankind in truth. Therefore, whosoever accepts the Guidance, it is only for his ownself, and whosoever goe3s astray, he goes astray only for his*** [***own***] ***loss. And you are not a guardian over people*** [***so that you necessarily have to guide them***]***.***

Following an enumeration of the arguments for Divine Unity and an exposition of the fates of disbelievers and monotheists, the blessed Verse in question explicates the fact that they shall be rewarded or chastised for their acknowledgement or denial of Truth and if the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) insists on guiding them, it is not for his own benefit rather he fulfils his obligation toward God.

The Verse reads:

"We have sent down unto you [***for your Guidance***] ***the Book*** [***the Holy Qur'an***] ***for mankind in truth. Therefore, whosoever accepts the Guidance, it is only for his ownself, and whosoever goe3s astray, he goes astray only for his*** [***own***] ***loss."***

The blessed Verse further adds:

"You are not a guardian over people [***so that you necessarily have to guide them***]***."***

His duty is to proclaim his prophetic mission and also to warn them.

The fact that whoever treads the Path of Truth will reap the fruits thereof and whoever goes astray shall pay for the evil consequences thereof is oft-repeated in Qur'anic Verses which emphasizes that neither God nor His Prophet (S) need His servants' belief nor are they afraid of their disbelief. God does not aim at gaining anything but He intends to show His Liberality to His servants.

The word wakil is ad hoc employed in the sense of someone responsible for converting those in error to faith.

The word is attested in the Holy Qur'an in the same clause or clauses similar to it which bear testimony to the fact that the Noble Prophet (S) is not obliged to convert people to the Islamic faith, since such conversion may not be attained through obligation, rather it is his duty to proclaim Divine Command to people at all times whether they turn to it or turn away from the same.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 42

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَى عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَى إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمّىً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

42. It is Allah Who takes away the souls at the time of their death and those that die not during their sleep. He keeps those [***souls***] ***for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed. Indeed in this*** [***taking and giving the soul at the time of sleep and wakefulness***] ***are*** [***great***] ***signs*** [***of Divine Omnipotence***] ***for a people who think deeply.***

In order to make it clear that all human affairs including their life and death is lies within Divine

Omnipotence, the blessed Verse in question says:

"It is Allah Who takes away the souls at the time of their death and those that die not during their sleep."

Thus, sleep is death's brother and the former indicates the least frailty of the nexus between soul and body and many a bond between the twain is severed at the time.

The Verse further adds:

"He keeps those [souls] for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed,"

such that they do not wake up and other souls for who He has ordained to live on are restored to their bodies for an appointed term. Verily, the point in question indicates clear signs for those who reflect upon the same.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 43

أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ كَانُوا لا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئاً وَلا يَعْقِلُونَ

43. Have they taken [idols] as intercessors besides Allah? Say "Even if they have power over nothing whatever and have no intelligence [could they still be intercessors on your behalf]?

An intercessor is supposed to be authorized by God. By whom are idols authorized? An intercessor is supposed to be God's favorite; however, idols are neither God's favorites nor is God satisfied with them.

The preceding Verse treated of God's Sovereignty over human existence and His plan of actions carried out through death, life, sleep, and wakefulness.

The blessed Verse in question discusses polytheists' error as to the question of intercession in order to substantiate the argument as per which the Master of intercession is the same as the One of human death and life rather than unintelligent idols.

The blessed Verse asks:

"Have they taken [idols] as intercessors besides Allah?"

As mentioned above, one of the pretexts used by polytheists was;

"We worship them only that they may bring us near unto Allah"[16]

since they either regarded idols as icons and tokens representing angels and sacred spirits or they

considered such inanimate pieces of stone and wood possess secret powers.

It is noteworthy that intercession is dependent upon intelligence and understanding in the first place and secondly, it depends on power, mastery, and sovereignty.

The blessed Verse proceeds to ask polytheists whether they invoke their idols to intercede on their behalf:

“Even if they have power over nothing whatever and have no intelligence** [**could they still be intercessors on your behalf**]**?”

If they consider their intercessors to be angels and sacred spirits, they are supposed to know that they have nothing of their own but they are totally dependent on God.

They may not invoke their stone and wooden idols to intercede on their behalf since besides lack of mastery, they are devoid intelligence and understanding. Polytheists are asked to abandon such pretexts and turn to the Master and Sovereign of the entire world of existence and all paths lead to Him.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 44

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعاً لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

44.** [**O Prophet!**] **Say** [**unto them**]**: “To Allah belongs all intercession** [**in this world and the Hereafter**]**. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you shall be brought back.”

God Almighty is the Master of the entire existence and all the agents involved in it.

The blessed Verse in question says:

“To Allah belongs all intercession** [**in this world and the Hereafter**]**. His is the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. Then to Him you shall be brought back.”

Thus, all idols are totally abandoned, since the Unity prevailing the entire world informs us that intercession is solely possible if it is permitted by God Almighty;

“Who is supposed to intercede with Him without His Permission?”[17]

Some exegets maintain that intercession is basically the same as supplication to the Most Beautiful Divine Names, His Graciousness, Forgivingness, and Concealing of sins committed by His servants. Thus, any intercession is supposed to be carried out with His Pure Essence. Therefore, how may one intercede with Him without His Own Permission?[18]

Exegets produce different interpretations as to the nexus between the clause:

“then to Him you shall be brought back”

and the preceding points discussed herein.

1. The clause indicates that not only the intercession in this world is subject to His Permission and one is not supposed to invoke other entities besides God to solve their problems and remove their hardships, but also intercession and deliverance in the Hereafter shall be dependent upon His Will.

2. The clause in question produces another argument for the fact that intercession is solely dependent on God Almighty since the first argument lays emphasis on Divine Mastery and the second one emphasizes the return of all beings toward Him.

3. The clause serves as a warning to polytheists as per which they all return unto God Almighty and shall be chastised for their evil deeds. It is to be noted that all the interpretations sound appropriate; however, the first two seem to be more suitable as to the contextual meaning of the Verse.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 45

وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

45. And when Allah Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and when those besides Him are mentioned, they rejoice immediately.

One may test his belief and faith in the Hereafter through his disgust at or attention toward Divine Commands. Likewise, remembrance of God which is the source of consolation for believers is a source of harm for disbelievers.

The blessed Verse in question also treats of monotheism and polytheism depicting quite a vicious picture of polytheists and those denying the Hereafter confronting the question of Divine Unity, saying:

“And when Allah Alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and when those besides Him are mentioned, they rejoice immediately.”

Man is at times so accustomed to vices and so far from purity and good that he is offended upon hearing the Name of Truth and rejoices upon hearing falsehood, failing to show humbleness toward God, the Creator of the world of existence, though he kneels down before manmade pieces of stone and wood, human beings, and creatures like himself.

A similar theme is to be found in 17:46:

“And when you make mention of your Lord Alone in the Qur’an, they turn on their backs, fleeing in extreme dislike.”

Noah (Nuh), the Arch-Prophet, complains to God Almighty about such misguided people saying:

“And indeed, every time I called unto them that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, and persisted [***in error***]***, and magnified themselves in pride”***[19].

The biased obdurate and the vain ignorant are like that. It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question clearly indicates that the misfortune of such people sprang from denial of Divine Unity and faithlessness in the Hereafter.

Au contraire, believers are so rejoiced by hearing the Sacred Name of the One God that they sacrifice their possessions for Him. The mere Name of the Beloved makes them some happy and illuminates their hearts that not only His Name but also whatever is attached to Him rejoices them.

One is not supposed to assume that such dislike is restricted to the polytheists contemporaneous with the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) but vicious disbelievers at all times rejoice at hearing the names of God’s enemies, atheistic schools of thought, and tyrants’ and wrong doers’ triumphs, but the mere names of the good and the pure and their plans and victories are excruciating pains to them.

As a consequence, as per the interpretations included in a number of traditions, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to those people who dismayed at hearing the excellence of the Noble Prophet’s (S) Household (as) and the triumphs of their school of thought.[20]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 46

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

46. Say: “O Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Omniscient of the unseen and the seen! You shall arbiter between your servants about that wherein they used to differ [***at all times***]***.”***

Confronting obdurate disbelievers, religious leaders and promulgators of religion are supposed to remember God and invoke him for succor at all times. The blessed Verse in question is saying that these obdurate people and the vain ignorant are even disgusted at hearing the Name of God Almighty.

God Commands His Prophet (S) to turn away from them and turn toward His Threshold invoking Him with a tone revealing his profound faith imbued with his love for Him and complain to Him about such people such that he may find a source of consolation for his heart filled with sorrow and also make attempts thereby to awaken disbelievers’ sleeping souls thus:

“Say: “O Allah! Creator of the heavens and the earth! Omniscient of the unseen and the seen! You shall arbiter between your servants about that wherein they used to differ [*at all times*]*.”*

The Resurrection Day is the Day of Judgment of all differences. Now many a truth are concealed from man’s perception, but He is the Master and the Sovereign, the Creator of all things, the Omniscient of their secrets. Man will think about compensating his past deeds on that Day, but it will be of no avail.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 47

وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لافْتَدَوْا بِهِ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ

47. And those who did wrong, if they had all that is on earth and therewith as much again, they verily, would offer it to ransom themselves therewith on the Day of Resurrection from the Divine excruciating torment [***though it shall be of no avail***]***, and there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning.***

There shall be no ransom for wrong doers on the Day of Judgment, as a consequence of which the blessed Verse in question says:

“If wrong doers had all that is on earth and therewith as much again, they verily, would offer it to ransom themselves therewith on the Day of Resurrection from the Divine excruciating torment [***though it shall be of no avail***]***.”***

Wrong doing (shirk) ad hoc bears a wide range of meaning which includes polytheism and other wrong doings as well.

The blessed Verse proceeds further to add:

“there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning.”

They may not imagine the torments to be inflicted upon them. Besides, they falsely imagine that Divine Mercy will be granted to them but they were unaware of His Wrath. They do deeds which are supposed by them to be good deeds whereas some of their deeds were grave sins.

It stands against the Promise given to believers[21]:

“No person knows what is kept hidden for them of joy as a reward for what they used to do.”

It is reported that on death bed, a Muslim was quite restless.

Upon inquiry, he replied:

“I recalled the Verse

‘and there will become apparent to them from Allah what they had not been reckoning’

and fear wrapped me up. I fear that there will become apparent to me from Allah what I had not been reckoning.”[22]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 48

وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

48. And [***on that Day***] ***the evils of that which they earned*** [***in their mundane life***] ***will become apparent to them, and that which they used to mock at will encircle them.***

The Day of Resurrection is the Day on which all secrets shall be known, thus the blessed Verse in question says:

“[***on that Day***] ***the evils of that which they earned*** [***in their mundane life***] ***will become apparent to them, and that which they used to mock at will encircle them.”***

It is noteworthy that four points are raised in this Verse as to polytheists and wrong doers:

1. Fear of Divine Chastisement is so severe that even if they had all the worldly possessions, they would not be able to barter them for deliverance from torment.

2. Different kinds of Divine Chastisement will become apparent to them which they did not imagine.

3. All sins committed by men will become apparent and embodied before them.

4. That which they used to mock at will become apparent to them like absolute or objective reality and they shall find no deliverance.

It is to be noted that :

“the evils of that which they earned [***in their mundane life***] ***will become apparent to them”***

produces another argument to substantiate the question of the embodiment of deeds, since there would be no need for the words chastisement and recompense to be included by predestination.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 49

فَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ نِعْمَةً مِنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَى عِلْمٍ بَلْ هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

49. When harm touches man, he calls to Us; then when We have granted him a favor, he says: "Only because of my knowledge [and plan of actions] I obtained it." [It is not like that], it is only a trial, but most of them know not!

Experiencing hardships renders man to confess to his weakness and awakens man's God seeking primordial natural disposition in him and flourishes the same.

Thus, the blessed Verse says that whenever man is afflicted with loss and harm, pain, hardship, and poverty, he invokes God for their removal. He is the same man who disgusted at hearing the Name of the One God, now that he is entangled with vicissitudes, he seeks refuge in Divine Mercy.

Yet, his refuge is also transient since when God Almighty grants him a favor, he says that it was solely out of his savoir–faire and competence:

(***"then when We have granted him a favor, he says: 'Only because of my knowledge [and plan of actions] I obtained it.'"***)23

An instance of such ingratitude is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an24 uttered by Qarun (Korah) addressing the scholars of the Children of Israel providing him with admonitions:

"This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess."

Such ignorant people do not reflect in the least upon the fact that their knowledge is also a Divine Favor granted to them. Do they assume that the knowledge leading to gaining abundant possessions is their own? Is it their innate quality?

Addressing such vain and incapable braggarts who forget their small capacity when the gain worldly possessions, the Holy Qur'an says:

"[It is not like that], it is only a trial, but most of them know not!"

The trial aims at making them reveal what they entertain in their hearts upon gaining mundane possessions. Are they rendered desperate upon experiencing afflictions? Do they become vain upon gaining worldly possessions?

Do they invoke God or are they ensnared by mammon upon being afflicted with vicissitudes? Do they consign themselves to oblivion or they notice their frailties and remember God more than the past?

It is unfortunate that the majority of people are forgetful and do not attend to such facts. Qur'anic Verses reiterate the truth many a time that the Omniscient God entangles man with hardships and also bestows on him peace and other Bounties so as to test him, make him to comprehend better the true value of his existence, and make him acquainted with the fact that everything springs from Him.

Vicissitudes basically pave the path for man's primordial natural disposition to flourish; it is in the same

manner that blessings serve as a prelude to gaining knowledge.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 50 - 51

قَدْ قَالَهَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ

50. Indeed, those before them said it** [**as well**]**, yet that they had earned** [**in the world**] **availed them not.
***51. Therefore, the evil** [**consequences**] **of that which they earned overtook them and those** [**Meccan disbelievers**] **who did wrong shall soon be overtaken by the evil** [**consequences**] **of what they had committed and they shall never be able to render Us desperate** [**to escape from Us**].*

History is the best testimony that upon Divine Wrath mundane possessions may save man neither in this world nor in the Hereafter.

When God Almighty caused the earth to swallow Qarun (Korah) and his swelling place, he had no group or party to render him assistance against Allah, nor was he one of those who could save themselves[25].

Verse 50 reads:

"Those before them said it** [**as well, i.e., they also claimed that their possessions were the fruits of their knowledge and competence**]**, yet that they had earned** [**in the world**] **availed them not."

Vain people like Qarun considered their possessions to be owing to their own competence and had consigned to oblivion the fact that they were due to Divine Bounties; however, history bears testimony to the fact that when God caused the earth to swallow their possessions, there was no one to render them assistance nor their possessions were of any avail to them, as it is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[26]:

"Therefore, We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling place. Then he had no group or party to help him against Allah."

The same fate was in store for the peoples of 'Ad, Thamud, Sheba, and others.

Verse 51 says:

"The evil** [**consequences**] **of that which they earned overtook them."

They were afflicted with Divine Chastisements, e.g. storm, flood, earthquake, and outcries from the

heaven (instantaneous death), and met their dire end.

The blessed Verse further adds that it was not merely their fate, but Meccan polytheists and wrong doers would soon be overtaken by the evil consequences of their vicious deeds and would not be able to escape from Divine Chastisement. Yet, the dire fate embraces all vain wrong doers in all eras unaware of Divine Wrath.

Exegets have considered:

"[they] shall soon be overtaken by the evil [consequences] of what they had committed"

to indicate affliction with mundane or otherworldly torment.

However, taking into account:

"the evil [consequences] of that which they earned overtook them,"

it sounds that the former is more appropriate herein.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 52

أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

52. Do they not know [yet] that Allah enlarges the provision for whom He wills? Indeed, in this are signs [of Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence] for those who believe.

Man's knowledge and endeavor are the requisites for gaining provision, but they are not sufficient. He is not supposed to solely rely on his knowledge and capabilities, since everything depends on another Power.

In reply to those who considered their possessions as the fruits of their knowledge and capacities, the Holy Qur'an reminds man to take a glance at the history of ancient peoples and notice that others uttered such claims and experienced the afflictions and torments. It is a historical reply.

Thus the blessed Verse in question produces an intellectual reply:

"Do they not know that Allah enlarges the provision for whom He wills?"

There are many a worthy people overtaken by deprivation, privation, seclusion, and isolation and there exist many an incompetent and weak people enjoying all means of mundane welfare.

Had such means of worldly welfare the fruits of their endeavors and capabilities, there would not have been such discomfort for the worthy merits. It reveals that there is a Powerful Hand behind worldly affairs

that manages everything as per a well measured plan.

It is true that man is supposed to make his level best in life and making effort serve as the key to many a problem, but it would be a gross mistake to forget the Cause of all the causes and merely perceive the causes and consider ourselves as the real author of all the causes.

One of secrets of the unfulfilled wishes of some competent and knowledgeable people and the success and prosperity of some incompetent ignorant people is to remind people that they should not lose the thread in the world of causes nor are they supposed to rely on their own capacities.

Thus the blessed Verse ends:

"Indeed, in this are signs** [**of Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence**] **for those who believe."

In this vein, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"I knew God through the abrogation of decisions, solution of problems, and abrogation of wills."[27]

These beacon man's frailty and weakness so as he may not forget his incompetence and be not ensnared by vanity.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 53

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ لا تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعاً إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

53. Say "O My servants who have transgressed against** [**and wronged**] **yourselves! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: verily, Allah forgives all sins, since He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious."

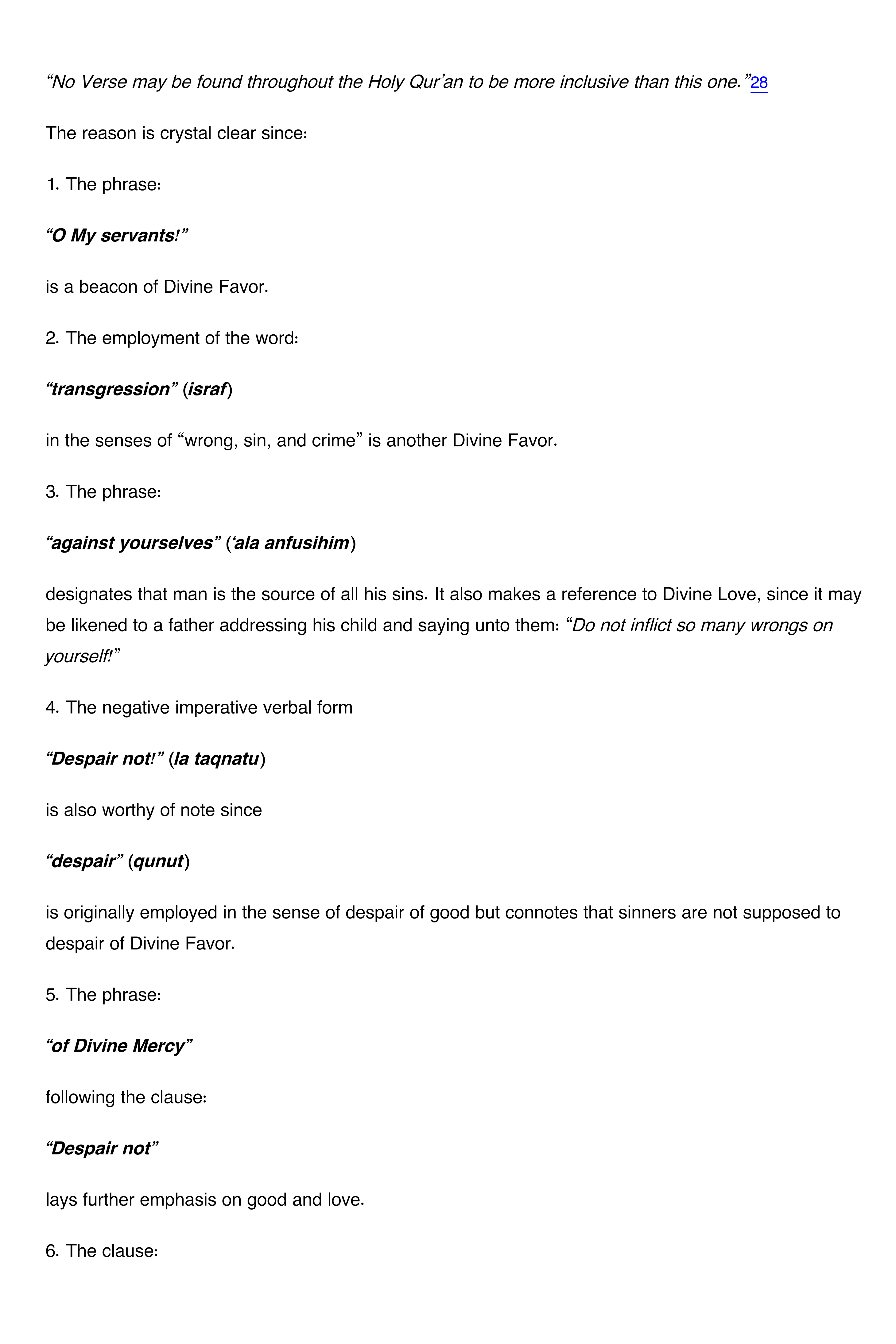
Pursuant to the recurrent warning to polytheists and wrong doers mentioned in the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse in question provides all sinners with the hope of turning to Allah Almighty, since the main goal behind all them is to guide man toward Him rather than hostility and vengeance.

Proclaiming His Boundless Mercy, Forgiving, and Love to all, He says:

"Say unto them 'O My servants who have transgressed against and wronged yourselves! Lose not your hope of Divine Graciousness since God Almighty forgives all sins."

He is Oft-Forgiving and Most Compassionate. Reflection on the meaning of the Verse indicates that It is the most promising Verse addressed to all sinners.

According to a tradition narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), the extent of its implication is such that



"No Verse may be found throughout the Holy Qur'an to be more inclusive than this one."[28]

The reason is crystal clear since:

1. The phrase:

"O My servants!"

is a beacon of Divine Favor.

2. The employment of the word:

***"transgression"* (*israf*)**

in the senses of "wrong, sin, and crime" is another Divine Favor.

3. The phrase:

***"against yourselves"* (*'ala anfusihim*)**

designates that man is the source of all his sins. It also makes a reference to Divine Love, since it may be likened to a father addressing his child and saying unto them: "*Do not inflict so many wrongs on yourself!*"

4. The negative imperative verbal form

***"Despair not!"* (*la taqnatu*)**

is also worthy of note since

***"despair"* (*qunut*)**

is originally employed in the sense of despair of good but connotes that sinners are not supposed to despair of Divine Favor.

5. The phrase:

"of Divine Mercy"

following the clause:

"Despair not"

lays further emphasis on good and love.

6. The clause:

“Verily, Allah forgives all sins”

opened with the emphatic particle inna and taking into account the plural definite noun al-dhunub (“the sins) which includes all sins, the Promise reaches its zenith and the sea of Divine Mercy becomes full of waves.

7. Hopefulness reaches its climax with the adverb of manner

jami’an (***“all”***).

8 and 9. The two promising Divine Beautiful Names:

“the Oft-Forgiving (***ghaffur***)***”***

and

“the Most Gracious (***rahim***)***”***

at the close of the Verse leave no room for the least despair and hopelessness.

Taking the above into consideration, we notice that it is the most inclusive Qur’anic Verse encompassing Divine Forgiveness of all sins as a consequence of which it is considered as the most promising Qur’anic Verses.

One may not expect otherwise from God Almighty Whose Ocean of Mercy is Boundless. His Graciousness exceeds His Wrath and has created His servants to bestow His Mercy upon them rather than subject them to His Wrath and Torment. God Almighty is the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, and the Most Loving.

Man may not expect otherwise.

Two questions have preoccupied exegets that their solutions lie in the Verse in question and the following One. Firstly, does the Verse include all sins, even polytheism and grave sins as well?

If so, what is the reason behind the exclusion of the sin of polytheism among those to be forgiven by God Almighty according to which:

“Verily, Allah forgives not that partners should associated with Him, but He forgives except that to whom He wills”[29]***?***

The other question concerns whether the Divine Promise as to Forgiving is conditional upon repentance and the like.

However, the two questions are interrelated and the response may be found the following Verses, since the latter contain three illuminating injunctions:

“Return to your God,”
“Submit to His Will,”

and

“Follow the injunctions sent down for you by your Lord.”

The three injunctions inform us that the gates of Divine Forgiving and Mercy are open to all servants provided that following committing sins, they perceive that they have sinned and change their course toward Divine Threshold, submit to His Command, show their sincerity in their repentance through doing righteous good deeds.

Thus, it becomes known that neither polytheism nor any other sin is excluded and its conditionality upon Divine All-Embracing Mercy is indubitable.

Regarding the aforementioned Verse[30] as to the exclusion of polytheists from Divine Mercy it is worthy of note that the exclusion is applicable to those passing away as polytheists rather than those who wake up and tread of the Path of Truth since almost all Muslims in the first days of Islam used to be polytheists.

Taking into account the state of many a sinner who following committing sins turn so grieved and regretful that they may never assume that there might be a path of return for them and consider themselves to be too impure to be absolved from their impurities, inquiring whether their sins might be forgiven and if there might be a path of return toward God Almighty, we may well comprehend the meaning of the Verse.

They are willing to repent in any way but consider their sins as unforgivable, particularly when they repented many a time but broke their repentance.

The Verse in question serves as a source of hope to them all. It is reported that upon his conversion to the Islamic faith, Wahshi, the notorious criminal in the history of Islam and the slayer of Hamza, the Chief of the Martyrs, was afraid that his repentance may not be accepted since his sin was too grave; however some exegets maintain that the blessed Verse in question was sent down opening the gates of Divine Mercy Wahshi and the like.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 54

وَأَنِيبُوا إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لا تُنْصَرُونَ

54. “And turn in repentance and in obedience with true faith to your Lord and submit to Him before the torment comes upon you then you will not be helped.

There is no salvation and attainment of Divine Help except through return toward Divine Threshold; consequently, repentance is the prerequisite for the bestowal of Divine Forgiving.

The blessed Verse shows the path toward the Boundless Ocean of Divine Mercy for all sinners and criminals saying:

“Turn in repentance... to your Lord”

and change your course in life for the better.

“Submit to Him and obey His Command before [***Divine***] ***torment comes upon you then you will not be helped.”***

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 55

وَاتَّبِعُوا أَحْسَنَ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَأَنْتُمْ لا تَشْعُرُونَ

55. “And follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord before the torment comes on you suddenly while you perceive not!”

The blessed Verse bids people to follow Qur’anic injunction since the best path is toward God Almighty and It is the most comprehensive and the most perfect of what is sent down unto man.

Following the two steps of repentance and submission to Divine Will, the Verse treats of the third step which is that of action:

“follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord before the torment comes on you suddenly while you perceive not!”

Thus, there are three steps to take so as to attain to Divine Mercy:

1. Repentance, regret about committing sins, and turning to God Almighty.

2. Faith and submission to His Command.

3. Doing righteous good deeds. After taking these three steps, one shall certainly enter the boundless ocean of His Mercy despite the heavy burden of man’s sins.

What is intended by:

“follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord?”

Exegets produce different possibilities the best of which sounds to be the one as per which Divine

Injunctions are of diverse types: some call people to carrying out obligatory acts, some address recommended ones, and some include permissible ones.

Taking the hierarchy of acts into account one may notice that the best indicates selecting obligatory and recommended acts.

Some exegets take it as a reference to the Holy Qur'an among Divine Books, taking into consideration Verse 23 of the same Chapter (39) as per which the Holy Qur'an is the Best Statement (ahsan al-hadith):

"Allah has sent down the Best Statement, a Book, its parts resembling each other."

However, the two interpretations are not inconsistent with each other.

1. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 8, p.497.
2. Ibn Hisham's Sira ["Biography of the Prophet of Islam (S)"], vol. 4, pp. 305-306 (the account is summarized herein); see also Ibn Athir's Kamil, vol. 2, pp. 323-324.
3. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verse in question.
4. For further details, see Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, pp. 177 f.; al-Muraja'at, p. 64.
5. Khashshaf [Exegesis]; Majma' al-Bayan; Abu al-Futuh Razi's Exegesis [Rawd al-Jinan wa Rawh al-Janan]; Fi Úilal al-Qur'an.
6. In his Mufradat, Raghib says that naqma is employed in the sense of "retribution, chastisement." It is to be noted that hidaya literally denotes "guidance with favor and precision, ibid, under h-d-y.
7. 3:51
8. 5:16
9. 53:23
10. 2:258
11. 2:264
12. 39:3
13. 40:28
14. 42:25
15. 29:61, 63; 31:31; 43: 9, 87
16. 39:3
17. (2:257)
18. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 17, p. 286.
19. 71:7
20. Usul Kafi; Rawdat al-Kafi; apud Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 4, p. 490.
21. 32:17
22. Majma' al-Bayan and Qurtubi (Exegeses), under the blessed Verse in question.
23. The verbal form khawwala is taken from takhwil ("grant a favor").
24. 28:78
25. 28:81
26. 28:81
27. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism no. 250.
28. Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Qurtubi; Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
29. 4:48
30. 4:48

Surah al-Zumar, Verses 56 - 75

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 56

أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسٌ يَا حَسْرَتَى عَلَى مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّاخِرِينَ

56. Lest a person should say "Alas, my grief that I was undutiful to Allah and I was indeed among those who mocked [***His Verses***]***."***

The Day of Resurrection is the Day of Regret. Underrating Divine Injunctions, and worse than that, mocking them all spring from neglect.

Following the emphatic injunction as to repentance and compensation for the past wrong deeds, the blessed Verse in question is saying that these injunctions have been sent down lest on the Day of Resurrection one may say:

"Woe to me that I failed to act upon Divine Command and I mocked His Verses and Messengers."

The word hasra is employed in the sense of sorrow and grief caused by past regrettable acts. In his Mufradat, Raghib says that the word derives from hasr indicating pull way or remove garment but it figuratively connotes regret about and grieve for the past acts as if the veils of ignorance have been removed.

When man is raised on the Day of Resurrection and perceives the consequences of his transgressions of bounds, neglects, sins, underrating serious affairs, will cry out "*Woe to me!*" A dire sense of grief and regret wraps up his heart and expresses himself with such interjections.

Exegets differ as to the meaning of

janb Allah (***"beside Allah"***)

and present many a suggestion.

The word is literally employed in the sense of side and it applies to anything located at the side of something else, in the same manner that yamin and yasar signify right and left sides of the body respectively, but owing to generalization, they imply anything located at the left and right sides.

The phrase:

"beside Allah"

also ad hoc designate all the affairs beside Him, e.g. His Command, Obedience to Him, Closeness to Him, The Divine Books sent down by Him.

Thus, the sinful regret about and grieve for their undutifulness against Allah and particularly lay emphasis on mocking Qur'anic Verses and Divinely appointed Messengers, since their wrong acts mainly stem from their neglect and derision which in turn spring from ignorance, vanity, and bias.[1]

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 57 - 58

أَوْ تَقُولَ لَوْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هَدَانِي لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

أَوْ تَقُولَ حِينَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ أَنَّ لِي كَرَّةً فَأَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

57. Or [***lest***] ***he should say*** [***out of profound grief***]***: "If only Allah has guided me, I should indeed have been among the righteous."***
58. Or [***lest***] ***he should say when he sees the torment: "If only I had another chance*** [***to return to the world***] ***then I should be among the good doers."***

On the Resurrection Day, sinners aim to acquit themselves of their sins. On the Day of Resurrection the sinful wish that they could return to the world in order to do good [to himself and others].

The blessed Verse in question says:

"Lest that the sinful say: 'Had God guided me, I would have been among the righteous.'"

Such words are apparently uttered upon reckoning, noticing that some people proceed toward Paradise enjoying all Bounties for their righteous good deeds. He also wishes that he could accompany them to Paradise.

Verse 60 is saying that upon experiencing Divine Chastisement, he wishes that he could return to the world to become one of the righteous. Upon treading the way to Hell, he notices the blazing fire and the excruciating torment, he sighs wishing that he could be permitted to return to the world and compensate for his sins through committing righteous deeds and become one of the good doers.

Thus, each of the three words are uttered at certain times: noticing the Resurrection he regrets his past deeds; perceiving the rewards of the righteous, he wishes that the same were in store for him; experiencing Divine Chastisement, he wishes that he could return to the world and compensate for his past deeds.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 59

بَلَى قَدْ جَاءَتْكَ آيَاتِي فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

59. Yes! Indeed, there came unto you My Verses but you denied them and were vain and were among disbelievers.

The sinful express some words on the Day of Resurrection:

1. Confessing to neglect

2. Confessing to derision

3. Wishing for guidance

4. Wishing for returning to the world.

God Almighty accepts his confessions but concerning the third word, the blessed Verse in question says that God Almighty provided you with Guidance but he denied it.

An answer provided for the fourth word is to be found elsewhere:

"Even if they are returned** [to the world] **they shall still be wrong doers."

A reply is provided for the second word as per which Divine Verses came unto him; however, he denied them and was vain and one of the disbelievers. He is saying that had Divine Guidance came unto him, he would have been one of the righteous.

What is Divine Guidance but some many Divine Books, God's Messengers, Divine Verses and Signs of Truth in horizons and souls? He saw and heard them all but what was his reaction toward them but denial, vanity, and disbelief?

Would it be possible that God Almighty chastises anyone without warning them? Was he different from the guided in terms of Divine Guidance? Therefore, he is to blame for his evil deeds. Vanity and denial of Divine Verses and Signs are the main reasons that lead to disbelief and faithlessness.

No answer is suggested for the first word, since it is an inevitable reality – they have to regret and grieve for their past vicious deeds. Regarding the third word, i.e., request for being returned to the world, numerous answers are provided, e.g.:

"if they were returned** [to the world]**, they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden. And indeed they are liars"[2]. [3]

Furthermore, the reply suggested for the second word may make a reference to the reply provided for this question as well – what is the goal of returning to the world? Is it anything other than being warned against vicious deeds?

It is worthy of note that God Almighty had already warned them and such further warnings would be futile. Experiencing torment in the Hereafter is their sudden awakening which will be rendered futile upon their return to the world.

In the same vein, the Holy Qur'an makes mention of polytheists entangled in the agitated sea invoking God with sincere devotion but upon stepping on the shore they consign everything to oblivion:

(***"And when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allah, making their faith pure for Him only: but when He brings them safely to land, behold, they give a share of their worship to others,"***[4]).

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 60

وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تَرَى الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ وُجُوهُهُمْ مُسْوَدَّةٌ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوىً لِلْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

60. And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied against Allah – their faces will be black. Is there not in Hell an abode for the vain?

Lying against Allah are of diverse kinds:

1. Associating other objects of worship with Him

2. Likening God Almighty to something

3. Regarding angels as God's offspring

4. Attributing one's vicious act to God Almighty

5. Pretending to be God or Divinely appointed Messenger

6. Making distortions and innovations in Divine Commands.

It is narrated in traditions that forging traditions and narrating them from the Infallible Imams (as) are on a par with lying against God Almighty, since the Infallible Imams narrate from the Noble Prophet (S) and the Prophet (S) imparts Divine Word.[5]

Pursuant to the words of the lying polytheists and the arrogant on the Day of Resurrection regretting about their past vicious deeds and their request as to being returned to the world to compensate for their past deeds which is a futile and unacceptable request, the blessed Verses in question treat of the same question saying:

"And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied against Allah – their faces will be black."

Although the meaning of

"lied against Allah"

is broad in its semantic range, but it is ad hoc applied to associating partners with God and claiming that angels, Jesus Christ (as), and the like are His offspring.

The word mustakbir indicates arrogant, but it is herein employed to refer to those who waxed arrogance against Divinely appointed messengers calling people to the Religion of Truth and their denial of them. The liars' blackened face on the Day of Resurrection reveals their disgrace and humility.

It is well known that secrets will be manifest and man's thought and deeds will be embodied on the Day of Resurrection. Those who have black hearts and their deeds were dark like their thought will be seen with dark and blackened faces on that Day.

In other words, what is concealed shall be manifest and faces shall reflect hearts as a consequence of which those with black hearts shall appear with blackened faces and those whose hearts are illuminating shall appear with bright faces on that Day.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[6]:

"On the Day** [**of Resurrection**] **when some faces will become white and some faces will become black; as for those whose faces will become black** [**unto them will be said**]**: 'Did you reject faith after accepting it? Then taste the torment** [**in Hell**] **for rejecting faith.' And for those whose faces will become white, they will be in Allah's Mercy, therein they shall dwell forever."

According to a number of traditions narrated from the Shi'i Imams (as), lying against Allah will lead to blackness of face on the Day of Resurrection is broader in its semantic range as per which it includes false claims to the leadership of the Muslim community (umma).

In the same vein, in his I'tiqadat, Shaykh Saduq narrates from Imam Sadiq that upon being asked as to the interpretation of the blessed Verse in question, he replied:

"It refers to one who pretends to be the Imam."

He was asked regarding such person whether he happens to be a descendant of 'Ali and Fatima (as), to which he replied:

"Even if he happens to be of such descent."[7]

It clearly bears testimony to the fact that false claim to Divine leadership and Imamate is an instance of

lying against God. In the same vein, those who lie against the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams will be on a par with those who lie against Allah.

Thus, it is reported in another tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Whoever transmits a tradition from us, we will ask him some day regarding its truth.

If he happens to be in the right and he is one of us, he has attributed a true word to God Almighty and His Messenger (S), but if he lied against us, he has lied against God and His Messenger (S), since when we report a tradition, we do not say such and such a person reported thus, but we say God or His Messenger (S) said it.

Then he recited the Verse:

'And on the Day of Resurrection you will see those who lied against Allah – their faces will be black.'"[8]

The tradition clearly bears testimony to the fact that the Shi'i Imams (as) transmitted nothing of their own, but all the sound traditions narrated on their authorities trace back to Prophetic traditions.

The fact in question is worthy of note for all Muslim scholars; therefore those who do not acknowledge their Imamate are supposed to acknowledge the veracity of their transmissions as Prophetic traditions.

In the same vein, another tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) in Kafi as per which:

"The tradition narrated by each of the Imams is another tradition and our tradition is that of the Messenger of God (S)."[9]

It is worthy of note that Qur'anic Verses clearly refer to the fact that disbelief mainly stems from vanity, as the Qur'anic Verse[10] says:

"He refused and was arrogant and was one of the disbelievers."

Thus, the arrogant may not dwell nowhere but in Hell.

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"There is an abode in Hell for the arrogant called Saqar which once complained to God Almighty about the unbearable heat and requested Him to take a breath. Upon obtaining the Permission, it took a breath and set Hell ablaze. [11]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 61

وَيُنَجِّي اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ لا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوءُ وَلا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

61. And Allah will deliver those who are the righteous with their success, untouched by evil in the least, nor shall they grieve.

Fear of God leads to deliverance and the God fearing entertain no grief.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the righteous and their happiness on the Day of Resurrection as opposed to the arrogant and the vain, saying:

"Allah will deliver those who are the righteous with their success."

Their deliverance and success are explicated with two terse clauses:

"[***They are***] ***untouched by evil in the least, nor shall they grieve."***

They live in a world devoid of anything but good, purity, and happiness. The brief expression actually encompasses all Divine Bounties.

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 62 - 63

اللَّهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ

62. Allah is the Creator of all things and He is the Guardian, Preserver, and Controller of all things.
63. To Him belongs the keys of the heavens and the earth. And those who disbelieve in Divine Signs and Verses, such are they who will be the losers.

The real monotheist believes in all dimensions of Divine Unity: Unity in Creatorship, Unity in Lordship, and Unity in worship.

The following Verse says:

"Do you order me to worship other than Allah?"

In other words, all existent beings need Him in creation and survival.

"Allah is the Creator of all things and He is the Guardian, Preserver, and Controller of all things."

The first and the second clauses refer to Unity in Creatorship and Unity in Lordship respectively.

It is noteworthy that even most of the polytheists admitted Unity of Creatorship, as it is reflected in Verse

38 of the Chapter in question:

"If you ask them [***i.e., disbelievers***]***" 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' Surely they will say: 'Allah.'"***

However, they had gone astray concerning Unity of Lordship, since they regarded idols as their guardians, preservers and disposers of their affairs and sought refuge in them in hardships.

The Holy Qur'an actually makes a reference to such belief saying that disposing the affairs of the world as well as its preservation and protection are at the hand of its Creator, as a consequence of which, people are supposed to seek refuge in Him at all times.

In his Lisan al-'Arab, Ibn Mansur makes mention of different senses for the word wakil, e.g. guardian, preserver, and disposer of affairs. Thus, it becomes evident that idols lead to neither gain, nor loss. They neither solve problems, nor do they make problems. They are weak and useless objects incapable of doing anything.

The clause:

"Allah is the Creator of all things"

is employed by some adherents of the school of predestination as an argument for their false belief, saying that their acts are referred to in the Verse in question, hence, Allah is the Creator of such acts, even if people physically carry out such acts.

Their gross mistake stems from their inability to comprehend that Divine Lordship as to man's acts has nothing to do with his free will, since Divine Will and human will are not parallel but rather interrelated lengthwise; in other words, man's acts are related to God and to himself.

On the one hand, all things in the world of existence are encompassed by Divine Omnipotence hence his acts are created by Him, since He provides man with power, intellect, free will, and the required means to act. Consequently, man's acts may be ascribed to Him.

He wills that man enjoys free will to act. He provides man will the means required for acting upon his will. Yet, man is free to choose his acts, as a consequence of which such acts are ascribed to him and he is responsible against them.

One who claims that man is the creator of his own acts and God has nothing to do with them is a polytheist, since he believes in two creators, the Great Creator and the small creator.

If one claims that God is the Creator of his acts and he has nothing to do with it, he has gone astray since he has denied Divine Wisdom and Justice.

Would it be possible that man be responsible for His Acts? If so, responsibility, obligation, the Hereafter,

reckoning, chastisement and reward would be meaningless.

Therefore, the standard Muslim dogmas based on Qur'anic Verses demonstrate that all human acts are ascribed both to Him and man and such ascription is not inconsistent in the least, since the relation between the two is not parallel but lengthwise.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 64 - 65

قُلْ أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَأْمُرُونِّي أَعْبُدُ أَيُّهَا الْجَاهِلُونَ

وَلَقَدْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ لَئِنْ أَشْرَكْتَ لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

64. Say: "Do you order me to worship other than Allah? O you fools!"
65. And indeed it has been revealed to you as it was to those [***Messengers***] ***before you: "If you join others in worship with Allah, surely your deeds will be in vain and you will certainly be among the losers.***

The Verses in question are mainly addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) but all people are also involved in such affairs; yet, God Almighty addresses the Prophet (S) owing to the significance of the issue indicating that even if the Prophet (S) disbelieves for a single moment, his deeds will be in vain and he will be among the losers.

Thus, Verse 65 draws a neat distinction between belief and disbelief, saying:

"indeed it has been revealed to you as it was to those [***Messengers***] ***before you: 'If you join others in worship with Allah, surely your deeds will be in vain and you will certainly be among the losers.'"***

Therefore, disbelief leads to two consequences which may affect Divinely appointed Messenger in case of their disbelief: vanity of deeds and being a loser in one's life. The former refers to futility of righteous good deeds owing to disbelief since such acts will solely be acknowledged if one believes in Divine Unity.

Disbelief is likened to a blazing fire burning the tree of human deeds, a lightening setting ablaze all the crops of his life, a tempest rendering human deeds futile, as mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[12]:

"The parable of those who disbelieved in their Lord is that their works are as ashes, on which the wind blows furiously on a stormy day; they shall not be able to get aught of what they have earned. That is the straying, far away."

According to a prophetic tradition:

“God Almighty reckons the deeds of all servants unless they disbelieve; surely they shall be sent to Fire without reckoning.”[13]

Disbelievers will be among losers since they lose their most valuable possessions, i.e., intellect and life, in this spacious market of mundane world and fail to purchase anything except for regret and grief.

A question arises here: Would it be possible that Divinely appointed eminent prophets turn to disbelief as a consequence of which the Verse in question treats them in such harsh tone?

The answer to this question is crystal clear: they shall never turn to disbelief even if they enjoy the free will to do so and infallibility is not on a par with the loss of free will.

It is to be noted that their excellence of knowledge and their immediate and constant nexus with the Origin of Divine Revelation hinders them to entertain disbelief for one single moment. Would it be imaginable that an intelligent physician aware of the effects of a fatal poisonous substance entertains the thought of its consumption?

The Verse aims to warn people of the great risk of entertaining disbelief so as to inform them that God Almighty warns His Messengers about disbelief. It reminds one of the Arabic proverb:

“*I mean you, but O neighbor! Listen to it!*”

According to a tradition narrated from Imam ‘Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, inquired by Ma’mun concerning the Verses in question, he said:

“Such Verses refer to the Muslim community, even if the Messenger of God (S) is addressed herein.”[14]

Surah al-Zumar - Verses 66 - 67

بَلِ اللَّهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ وَالْأَرْضُ جَمِيعاً قَبْضَتُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ مَطْوِيَّاتٌ بِيَمِينِهِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

66. Nay! But worship Allah alone and be among the grateful.
67. They did not appreciate Allah as such as is due to Him, though on the Day of Resurrection the whole of the earth shall be subject to His Omnipotence and the heavens will be rolled up in His Hand. Glorified is He and Exalted is He above all that they associate as partners with Him.

Monotheism is the best manner of deliverance from loss and harm; likewise one may show his gratitude toward God Almighty is to worship Him.

Thus the blessed Verse lays further emphasis:

"Nay! But worship Allah alone and be among the grateful."

Precedence of Allah is for specification (hasr), i.e., you are solely supposed to worship the Pure Essence of Allah. What follows is the Divine Injunction to gratitude since showing gratitude for Divine Bounties bestowed upon man may serve as a means of knowing God and rejection of any kind of polytheism and disbelief.

Gratitude for Divine Bounties is in human primordial natural disposition, but it is supposed to follow the provider of bounties. Consequently, it leads to the acknowledgement of Divine Unity and thus idols which provide man with no bounty are abandoned.

Verse 67 treats of another exposition for rejection of polytheism and disbelief regarding it mainly to stem from not knowing God deservingly as a consequence of which his Sacred Name was relegated to those of idols:

(***"They did not appreciate Allah as such as is due to Him"***).

Polytheism and disbelief mainly spring from lack of appreciating God Almighty as such.

One who knows that His Existence is Boundless, He is the Creator of all creatures and they are at all times in need of His Source of Emanation and Divine Bounty, He is the Dispenser of the world of existence and He is the One Who solves all problems, He is the Provider of all existent beings and intercession depends on His Permission and Command, may not turn to another being.

It is worthy of note that duality is not applicable to God Almighty since two boundless beings are not reasonably possible.

To express Divine Omnipotence and Glory, the Verse in question employs a figurative expression saying:

"on the Day of Resurrection the whole of the earth shall be subject to His Omnipotence."

The word qabda is applied to what is grasped by hand and it is usually used figuratively in the sense of absolute power and sway in the same manner that it is said in daily speech that such and such city or such and such property are in hand of so and so.

The word ***matwwiyat*** is taken from tayy which literally denotes "to be enclosed" and at times it connotes "transience of life" or "passing by something."

The aforesaid expression is more clearly attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[15]:

"The Day when We shall roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books."

It is to be noted that one who has rolled up a scroll holding it in his hand wields perfect sway over it.

The choice of the word:

yamin (***"right hand"***)

is due to the fact that right hand is usually used by most of the people for carrying out tasks of significance since they feel that it is stronger than the left one.

In short, all these similes and expressions connote absolute sway of the Creator over the world of existence in this world and the Hereafter so that all men comprehend that in the Hereafter, the key to deliverance and the solution of problems is in the Hand of God Almighty lest they turn to idols and other objects of worship for intercession and any other support.

Are not the earth and the heavens under His Sway? Why do they make mention of the Hereafter? The reply to these questions is that on that Day, Divine Omnipotence shall be more manifest than any other time as It shall be evident to such extent that all men shall clearly perceive that all things belong to Him and they are under His Sway.

Furthermore, on the Day of Resurrection, some men may turn to others besides God Almighty for deliverance, in the same manner that Christians raise the question of deliverance for worshipping Jesus Christ (as). It is in this vein that the Verse treats of Divine Omnipotence on the Day of Resurrection.

The above clearly bears testimony to the fact that all these expressions are figurative and it is because of the brevity of words in our daily life that we have to express such exalted meanings with such small words.

Only very simple and narrow minded people may entertain Divine anthropomorphism in their minds. Since words fail to convey Divine Glory, one has to make use of such words in their figurative meanings with their broader semantic range.

It is noteworthy that a clear but terse conclusion closes the Verse:

"Glorified is He and Exalted is He above all that they associate as partners with Him."

Had man not pass judgments with his limited thought concerning His Glorified and Pure Essence, he would have never turned toward polytheism and idolatry.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 68

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَى فَإِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَنْظُرُونَ

68. And the Trumpet Shall be blown and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth shall swoon away [***and die***]***, except him whom Allah wills. Then it shall be blown a second time and they shall suddenly rise up, looking*** [***around***]***.***

All men die upon the blowing of the Trumpet; thus, the exception attested in the clause:

"except him whom Allah wills"

makes a reference to Divine Omnipotence. In other words, God Almighty wields absolute sway over the world of existence and when all die, He keeps alive those whom He wills. According to a number of traditions, [Archangels] Jibra'il, Israfil, and Mika'il, and also martyrs are mentioned among those who shall stay alive.[16]

The preceding Verses treated of the Day of Resurrection and blessed Verse in question pursues the same question and makes mention of many a characteristic thereof.

It opens with the end of the world, saying:

"And the Trumpet Shall be blown and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth shall swoon away [***and die***]***, except him whom Allah wills."***

The Verse proceeds with saying:

"Then it shall be blown a second time and they shall suddenly rise up, looking [***around***]***."***

The Verse clearly indicates that a sudden happening shall occur at the end of the world and the beginning of Resurrection. All animate beings immediately die at the end of the world and following an interlude, all human beings shall be suddenly raised and await Reckoning upon Resurrection.

The Holy Qur'an expresses these two incidents as:

"blowing of the Trumpet"

serving as an elegant metaphorical expression connoting sudden and simultaneous incidents, since ***nafkh*** denotes ***"blowing"*** and ***sur*** is employed in the sense of trumpet or a hollow horn usually used for setting caravan and or army to get underway or march or making them stop.

It is worthy of note that the two differed in tunes. The expression also connotes the ease of carrying out the task indicating that God Almighty raises all with one single Command likened to blowing of the

trumpet used for getting the caravan underway.

It has been repeatedly mentioned above that our words are invented for our limited daily life hence they fail to precisely convey the truths of the metaphysical world upon the end of this world and the beginning of the other world as a consequence of which we have to attend to the existing evidence and use ordinary words in a broader semantic range.

It is worthy of note that diverse expressions are attested in the Holy Qur'an as to the end of this world and the beginning of the world to come.

In this vein, different Verses (more than ten Verses) treat of:

"blowing of the Trumpet."

In one instance [17] mention is made of nuqira fi al-naqur which bears the sense of blowing the trumpet and the like:

(***"Then when the Trumpet is sounded. Verily, that Day shall be a Hard Day"***).

The expression:

qari'a (***"rigorous striking"***)

is also attested in 101:1-3.

The same theme is also expressed by the word:

sayha (***"harsh shout"***)

as in 36:49:

"They await only but a single shout which will seize them while they are disputing,"

which treats of the shout heard at the end of the world which takes men unawares.

Verse 53 of Chapter 36 treats of the shout heard on the Day of Resurrection upon hearing which all men shall raise and they shall be brought before the Just Lord:

"It will be but a single shout, so they shall all be brought up before Us."

The aforesaid Verses indicate that a very harsh shout shall make all the beings of the heavens and the earth die and it shall be the:

"shout of death."

They shall all come back to life by a very harsh shout by the time of Resurrection and it shall be the:

“shout of life.”

What is precisely the manner of the twain shouts? In what manner do they impress the beings?

Nobody save God Almighty knows the answer to this question. Treating of the Trumpet to be blown by Israfil at the end the world, a number of traditions indicate that all the beings of the heavens die upon blowing the Trumpet and God Almighty issues the Command of his death bidding him to die and he shall die.[18]

The majority of Qur’anic exegets interpret nafkh fi al–sur as

“blowing the Trumpet,”

as mentioned above. These are delicate expressions concerning the manner of the end of the world and the beginning of Resurrection. The question raised at the close of the Verse concerns the number of blowing the Trumpet.

The majority of exegets maintain that it is blown twice and the blessed Verse in question apparently makes a reference to the same.

Taking into account other Qur’anic instances regarding the same indicates the same, such that the first blowing is termed:

fright (***“faza’”***)***;***
(***“And the Day on which the Trumpet will be blown and all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth will be terrified,”***[19])

and the second one:

“death and life,”

referred to in Qur’anic Verses some of which were mentioned above, the former and the latter are termed:

“swooning and dying” (***sa’q***)

and

“rising up” (***qiyam***)*.*

It is true that there shall not be more than the twain.

Another Qur’anic evidence may be produced for the matter at hand, namely:

“On the Day the earth and the mountains will shake violently.”

The second earthquake shall occur raising servants as peers.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 69

وَأَشْرَقَتِ الْأَرْضُ بِنُورِ رَبِّهَا وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ وَجِيءَ بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لا يُظْلَمُونَ

69. [***On that Day***] ***the earth will shine with the Light of its Lord and the Book of deeds will be placed*** [***forward***] ***and the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward and it will be judged between them with truth and they will not be wronged.***

The phrase:

"with the Light of its Lord" (***bi-nur-i rabbih***)

denotes either the Light of Truth and Justice with which God Almighty illuminates the earth on that Day or a Light other than the one shed by sun and moon to be Divinely created on that Day.

The exegetic work Atyab al-Bayan reads:

"Since the light of sun and moon is not apparent,

"the Light of its Lord"

indicates the Light shed by believers,"

then this Verse in cited as evidence thereof:

"On the Day you shall see the believing men and women, their light illuminating before them and by their right hands"[20].

The blessed Verse in question resumes the discussion concerning Resurrection, saying:

"[***On that Day***] ***the earth will shine with the Light of its Lord."***

Different interpretations have been suggested as to the "shining" with Divine Light, the most significant of which are the following:

1. Some exegets maintain that Divine Light indicates Truth and Justice with which God Almighty illuminates the face of the earth.

In his Bihar al-Anwar 'Allama Majlisi says:

"That is, the earth shall be illuminated with Divine Justice on the Day of Resurrection, since Justice is the Light of the earth."[21]

Some other exegets maintain that the Prophetic tradition:

“Wrong doing manifests itself as darkness and shadows on the Day of Resurrection”

substantiating the suggestion in question.22

In his Kashshaf, Zamakhshari suggests the same meaning, saying:

“On that Day, the earth shall be illuminated by the administration of justice and fair arbitration of records of righteous and vicious deeds.”

2. Some other exegets hold that it is a reference to a Light other than that of sun and moon which shall be created by God Almighty particularly for that Day.

3. The eminent author of [the exegetic work] Tafsir al-Mizan [‘Allama Tabataba’i] says:

“Illumination of the earth by Divine Light is regarded as one of the characteristics of the Day of Resurrection which is uncovering veils and manifestation of the truth behind things and human deeds including good, evil, obedience, disobedience, truth, and falsehood,”

following which Verse 22 of Chapter 50 is quoted to substantiate the suggested meaning:

“You neglected it, then we unveiled the cover from you and your eyes see it clearly today!”

It is true that Divine Light on that Day encompasses all things, but the emphasis laid on the earth refers to the fact that it makes a reference to the state of people on earth on that Day.

It is to be noted that the aforementioned interpretations are not inconsistent; however the first and the third interpretations sound more appropriate.

The blessed Verse in question indubitably refers to Resurrection and interpreting it in a number of traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet’s (S) Household (as) [Ahl al-Bayt] to Imam Mahdi’s (as) Rise at the end of the world is in fact a kind of comparison and likening, emphasizing that upon his Rise, incidents resembling Resurrection shall occur and he will administer justice as per the nature of the world as the rightful Imam (as), the Successor to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), and the Vicegerent of God Almighty on the earth.

Mufaddal ibn ‘Umar narrates from Imam Sadiq (as):

“Upon the Rise of our Riser, the earth shall be illuminated by Divine Light and Lord’s servants shall not be in need of sun shine and darkness shall wither away.”

The second clause of the blessed Verse in question treats of the record of deeds, saying that on that Day, the record of deeds shall be put forward and man’s deeds shall be reckoned;

(*“And the Book* [*of deeds*] *shall be put forward”*).

Such records embrace all the significant and non-significant deeds and according to the Holy Qur’an[23]:

“What sort of Book is this that leaves neither a small sin nor a grave sin, but has recorded it with numbers!”

The following clause of the blessed Verse in question treating of witnesses further adds:

“the Prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward.”

Prophets shall be summoned to talk to sinners concerning the fulfillment of their Prophetic Missions:

(***“We shall definitely inquire the Messengers,”***[24]).

Witnesses shall be called to the Just Tribunal to bear witness. It is true that God is Omniscient, but the testimony of witnesses shall be required for laying emphasis on Divine Justice. Who are these witnesses?

Qur’anic exegets are not unanimous on the issue. Some regard the good, the pure, and the just among communities who bear witness to Prophetic Missions and some regard the deeds of the people contemporaneous with Prophets.

The Infallible Imams (as) are regarded as the forerunners of the witnesses.

Substantiating their arguments by the Qur’anic Verse:[25]

“And every person will come forth along with his companion to drive him to Divine Tribunal and a witness accompanies him,”

some other exegets interpret witnesses as angels bearing testimony to man’s deeds. Yet, there are exegets who interpret the word alluding to bodily members, space, and time of obedience and disobedience as witnesses on the Day of Resurrection.

However, the word

“witnesses”

is apparently employed in its broad semantic range and each of the exegets refer to one of the aspects thereof.

The fourth clause says:

“It will be judged between them with truth.”

The fifth clause further adds:

"They will not be wronged."

It is evident that when God Almighty wields sway, the earth is illuminated by the Light of His Justice, the record precisely reflecting man's deeds is put forward, and the Prophets and just witnesses make their presence, the Judgment shall be based on Truth and Justice and wrong doing may not find its way there.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 70

وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ

70. And each person shall be paid in full of what he did and He is Best Aware of what they do.

Divine Chastisement and Reward shall be paid in full.

The sixth clause that completes the foregoing discussion is to be found in the blessed Verse in question:

"Each person shall be paid in full of what he did."

It is neither the Chastisement nor the Reward of the deeds which shall be given to man but the deeds themselves.

It shall be the best Chastisement and the best Reward that they shall be paid in full and they shall accompany man at all times. Who is able to administer justice so precisely but One Whose Knowledge encompasses everything.

Thus, the seventh and the last clause says:

"He is Best Aware of what they do."

There is even no need for witnesses, since His Omniscience far exceeds all witnesses. Yet, Divine Favor and Justice require the presence of witnesses. This is the Day of Resurrection for which we have to prepare ourselves.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 71 - 72

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى جَهَنَّمَ زُمَراً حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءُوهَا فُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَيُنْذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا بَلَى وَلَكِنْ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ

قِيلَ ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

71. And those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups till when they reach it the gates thereof will be opened and its keepers shall say: "Did not the Messengers come unto you from yourselves reciting to you the Verses of your Lord warning you of the Meeting of this Day?" They will say: "Yes, [the Messengers came unto us and recited Divine Verses unto us]," but the Command of Divine torment has been justified against disbelievers.
72. It will be said [unto them]: "Enter the gates of Hell to abide therein and what an evil abode of the arrogant."

Driving sinners toward Hell is a humiliation different from other Chastisements. The blessed Verses in question resume the discussions on Resurrection providing details concerning what was already said concisely in the foregoing Verses regarding the Rewards and Chastisements of believers and unbelievers.

Verse 71 opens with the people of the Hell, saying:

"Those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups."

Who will drive them to Hell? The answer is that the angels responsible for inflicting torments will drive them to the gates of Hell.

A similar expression is to be found elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[26]:

"And every person will come forth along with his companion to drive him to Divine Tribunal and a witness accompanies him."

The word:

zumar ("small group")

indicates that they will be driven in small and scattered groups toward Hell. The word siqa is taken from s-w-q ("to drive").

The blessed Verse 71 further adds that they proceed toward Hell till they reach it. Then, the gates of Hell will be opened and the guardians of Hell will reproach them thus:

"Did not the Messengers come unto you from yourselves reciting to you the Verses of your Lord warning you of the Meeting of this Day?"

The expression clearly reveals that prior to their arrival, the gates of Hell are shut in the same manner that the gates of prisons are closed but upon the arrival of new comers, they open to them all of a sudden and the sudden opening of the gates inspires more fear and awe in their hearts.

Prior to anything else, the people of Hell bombard them with reproaches saying that all the means of guidance was prepared for you. Messengers from among yourselves used to recite to you Divine Verses and constantly warned you to follow the Straight Path.

What did happen that such misfortune befell you? Such words uttered by guardians of Hell will be among the most excruciating pains by which they will be welcomed upon their entering Hell.

Their reply is a painful brief sentence:

"Yes, the Messengers came unto us and recited Divine Verses unto us and warned us of our disbelief."

Consequently, the Command of Divine torment will be justified against disbelievers.

Some Qur'anic exegets regard the phrase:

"the Command of Divine torment" (***kalimat al-'adhab***)

an allusion to Divine Word upon Adams Fall onto the earth or upon Satan's decision as to deceiving the Children of Adam, as reflected elsewhere in the Qur'an[27]:

"But those who disbelieve and belie Our Ayat (***"Signs, Verses"***)***, they are the dwellers of the Fire. They shall abide therein forever. When Satan said unto God Almighty that he would deceive all but His sincerely devout servants, He replied: "I will fill Hell with jinn and mankind[28]."***

Thus, they confess that they disbelieved the Prophets and Divine Verses and naturally a better fate may not be in store for them.

It is also possible that:

"the Command of Divine torment has been justified against disbelievers"

indicates that at times, owing to committing many a sin and bearing animosity, grudge, and prejudice against Truth, man's heart is sealed and he may not return in which case the Command of Divine torment will be justified against him.

It is to be noted that such misfortune stems from man's deeds and there is no room for predestination and lack of human free will.

The brief dialogue at the gates of Hell comes to its end by saying unto them:

"Enter the gates of Hell to abide therein and what an evil abode of the arrogant."

As mentioned above,

“the gates of Hell”

may refer to those set in conformity with human deeds and each and every group will be driven to Hell as per their acts.

Likewise, the gates of Paradise conform to deeds.

The name of a gate of Paradise, “the gate of warriors” (bab al-mujahidin) is mentioned by Imam ‘Ali (as):

“Verily, jihad is one of the gates of Paradise.”[29]

It would be of interest to note that from amongst all human vices, the angels of torment driving man to Hell lay emphasis on arrogance which bears testimony to the fact that disbelief and sin mainly spring from arrogance and disobedience against the Truth.

Arrogance casts thick veils over man’s eyes and deprives him of perceiving the illuminating countenance.

Likewise, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq and Imam Baqir (as):

“One who entertains the slightest degree of arrogance in his heart may not enter Paradise.”[30]

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 73

وَسِيقَ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَراً حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءُوهَا وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُهَا وَقَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوهَا خَالِدِينَ

73. And those who kept their duty to their Lord will be led to Paradise in groups till when they reach it and its gates will be opened and its keepers will say peace be upon you! You have done well, so enter here to abide therein!

Purity is the prerequisite to being admitted to Paradise which has come into being owing to either someone’s primordial natural disposition or repentance.

According to a narration narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as) in Kitab al-Khisal,

“Paradise has eight gates, each of which is for a certain group: one for Prophets and sincerely devout believers, one for martyrs and good doers, five for my adherents (shi’a), and one for Muslims who bear no grudge against me.”[31]

The blessed Verse in question resumes the discussion on the hereafter. The preceding Verses treated of the manner by which believers enter Hell but the Verse in question expresses the way righteous

believers enter Paradise so that the comparison sheds further light on the issue.

The Verse opens with saying that those who feared God shall be taken to Paradise in groups.

The expression:

***"will be led"* (*siqa*),**

taken from s-w-q ("drive, lead") in the clause:

"Those who kept their duty to their Lord will be led to Paradise"

arises a question attracting the attention of many an exeget, since the expression is employed when something is carried out without enthusiasm and inclination.

It is true about the people of Hell but why is it used for the people of Paradise who enthusiastically proceed toward Paradise?

Some exegets suggest that the enthusiasm of meeting their Lords has attracted their attention to such an extent that they do not heed anything besides him, even Paradise. Some maintain that they are alighted on mounts taking them to Paradise in no time.

All these suggestions are consistent and stand to reason, but it is worthy of note that the best interpretation may be the fact that the more the righteous are eager to enter Paradise, Paradise and angels of Mercy are more eager to admit them to their everlasting abode.

Likewise, a host may at times be so eager to meet his guest that he will take him faster than the guest proceeding toward him.

It is noteworthy that the word:

***zumar* (*"small group"*)**

indicates that the people of Paradise proceed toward their everlasting abode in different groups revealing the hierarchy of their spiritual states.

Upon reaching Paradise, they notice that the gates have been already opened to them.

Then the guardians and keepers of Paradise, the angels of Mercy say unto them:

"Peace be upon you! You have done will, so enter here to abide therein!"

It would be of interest to note that upon reaching Hell, the gates open where as the gates had been already open for people of paradise.

Having already been open makes a reference to the respect paid to the people of Paradise, like a host who has opened the gate of his house and willingly awaiting to meet his guest. The angels of Divine Mercy act accordingly.

The preceding Verse treated of the people of Hell who are reproached by the angels of torment upon their arrival censuring them that despite the availability of the means of guidance, such misfortune befell them. However, the people of Paradise are welcomed by greetings and words revealing respect and homage following which they will be invited to enter their everlasting abode!

The verbal form:

***tibtum** (“you have done well”)*

is taken from t–’–b (“be good, be pleased”), which following greetings is used in the sense of “be pleased, be happy,” in other words, thus the angels say unto them:

“Enjoy these pure Bounties, O you who are pure of heart and nature!”

However, many an exeget consider the clause to be in the indicative mood taking it to mean that the angels say unto them:

“You have been purified of any impurity. Faith and righteous good deeds have purified your hearts and souls. You are absolved of your sins.”

Some of the exegets even cite a narration according to which there is a tree at the gate of Paradise underneath which there is a fountain of pure water from which believers drink and thus purify themselves inwardly.

They wash themselves in another spring and thus cleanse themselves outwardly.

Then the keepers of Paradise say unto them:

“peace be upon you! You have done well, so enter here to abide therein!”[32]

It is to be noted that

“everlasting abode”

is mentioned for peoples of Hell and Paradise so as the former know that there is no deliverance and the latter may not entertain any concern regarding the transience of Divine Bounties.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 74

وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهُ وَأَوْرَثَنَا الْأَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّأُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَيْثُ نَشَاءُ فَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَامِلِينَ

74. And [***the people of Paradise***] ***will say: "Praise be to Allah Who has fulfilled His Promise to us and has made us inherit the land. We can dwell in Paradise where we will." How excellent a reward for good doers!***

It is the permanent disposition of the people of Paradise to say:

"Praise be to Allah"

following enjoyment of Divine Bounties.

The blessed Verse in question mentions four terse clauses revealing their utmost satisfaction:

"Praise be to Allah Who has fulfilled His Promise to us."

The Verse further adds:

"[***He***] ***has made us inherit the land."***
"The land"

ad hoc designates "the land of Paradise" and

"inherit"

indicates that so many bounties are bestowed upon them for little efforts. It is common knowledge that inheritance refers to something fallen into someone's share without taking troubles. It may also allude to the fact that everyone has a place in Paradise and a place in Hell.

When he turns into one of the people of hell for his vicious deeds, his place in Paradise will be assigned to others, but if one becomes one of the people of Paradise, his place in Hell will remain there for those doomed to Hell.

It may also indicate that they may use it freely in the same manner that one may make use of his inheritance as he wish.

The clause actually reveals the fulfillment of Divine Promise which is also mentioned in 19:63,

"Such is the Paradise which we shall give as an inheritance to those of Our servants who have been God fearing."

The third clause thus indicates their free will in making use of their Lord's vast Paradise:

"We can dwell in Paradise where we will."

Different Qur'anic Verses indicate that there are many a Garden in Paradise and the expression

“the everlasting Gardens of Paradise” (jannat ‘adn,33)

refers to the same. People of Paradise dwell in them according to their spiritual states and stations. Thus they may freely select their abodes in the vast Gardens of Paradise.

They never opt for stations more exalted than theirs nor do they request the attainment to the same.

Finally, thus they say in the last clause:

“How excellent a reward for good doers!”

Good doers are those who act upon Divine Commands. It reveals that such rewards are bestowed because of past righteous good deeds.

Such excellence stems from faith and good deeds. Who asks the last clause, God Almighty or the people of Paradise?

Qur’anic exegets maintain that both are possible but it would be more consistent with other clauses in the same Verse if we considered it as an expression of surprise uttered by the people of Paradise.

Surah al-Zumar - Verse 75

وَتَرَى الْمَلائِكَةَ حَافِّينَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَقِيلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

75. And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne, glorifying their Lord with praises. And they will be judged with truth and it will be said: “All the praises are to Allah, the Lord of the world.”

The word:

hafin (***“those who surround”***)

derives from h-f-f (“surround”) and ‘arsh is the seat of Divine Omnipotence and Will. Angels are prepared to act upon Divine Commands;

(***“surrounding the Throne”***)

glorifying their Lord at all times.

The closing Verse of the Chapter in question is an address to the Noble Prophet (S), saying:

“[***On that Day,***] ***you will see the angels surrounding Divine Throne circumambulating it and glorifying their Lord with praises.”***

Making a reference to the angels surrounding Divine Throne either indicates their preparation for acting upon Divine Commands or alludes to the cherished spiritual state of those close to Divine Threshold on that Day. The three interpretations are not inconsistent, but the first interpretation sounds more appropriate.

Thus the blessed Verse in question proceeds:

"They** [**i.e., Lord's servants**] **will be judged with truth."

Since they serve as tokens of Divine Lordship and glorification of His Pure Essence with all praises, thus the Verse closes:

"All the praises are to Allah, the Lord of the world."

Who says it? People of Paradise? The righteous? All of them? Seemingly, the last choice is more appropriate since the wise and those close to Divine Threshold glorify God Almighty with praises and thanks.

O Lord! Unanimously with all angels and your obedient servants, we all thank you for the Bounties that You have bestowed upon us, particularly studying the Verses of Your Holy Qur'an saying: "Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the World.

1. As per many a tradition narrated from Shi'i Imams (as), "beside Allah" is interpreted as "Shi'i Imams," for instance a tradition narrated from Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as) mentioned in Usul Kafi interprets "Alas, my grief that I was undutiful to Allah" as: "'Beside Allah' indicates the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (as) and also his eminent successors to the last of them [i.e., Imam Mahdi (as)]." It is also reported from Imam Sadiq (as) in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's exegetic work that "We are 'beside Allah.'" See Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 495.
2. 6:28
3. See also the Holy Qur'an, 23:100.
4. 29:65
5. Tafsir Burhan.
6. 3:106-107
7. Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 4, p.496.
8. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verse in question.
9. Kafi, vol. 1, the chapter on the transmission of books and traditions (Bab Riwayat al-Kutub wa 'l-Hadith), vol. 14.
10. 2:34
11. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir ("Exegesis"), apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 496; the same theme in Tafsir Safi, under the Verses in question.
12. 14:18
13. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 497.
14. Ibid.
15. 21:104
16. al-Mizan and Durr al-Manthur [exegetic works].
17. 74:8
18. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir ["Exegesis"], apud Nur al-Thiqalayn.
19. 27:87

20. 57:12
21. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 321.
22. Ruh al-Ma'ani and Ruh al-Bayan, under the Verses in question.
23. 18:49
24. 7:6
25. 50:21
26. 50:21
27. 2:39
28. 32:13
29. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 27.
30. Kafi, vol. 2, Chapter on Arrogance (Bab al-Kibr), tradition 6.
31. Tafsir al-Mizan.
32. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 574.
33. 9:72

Surah al-Ghafir, Chapter 40, Verses 1 - 22

Surah al-Ghafir or Surah al-Mu'min
(The Forgiver/The Believer)

Section (juz' 24)

Number of Verses: 85

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

This Chapter has eighty five Verses and it was revealed in Mecca. The title Ghafir derives from the third Verse in which God Almighty is mentioned as the Oft-Forgiver of sin (Ghafir al-dhanb).

The other title of the Chapter is Mu'min alluding to the person who was at the service of Pharaoh and concealed his faith so as to render support to Moses.

The account of the person in question, known as the believer among Pharaoh's people (mu'min al Fir'awn) may be found in Verses 28 ff. besides the accounts of Moses, Noah, 'Ad, and Thamud, the Chapter treats of Divine Unity, Resurrection, and Divine Wisdom.

There are approximately twenty Verses concerning the believer among Pharaoh's people which are not attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an.

There are seven consecutive Qur'anic Verses opening with Ha Mim; the Chapter in question is the first one in the series termed as Hawamim and the rest are: Fussilat, Shura, Zukhruf, Dukhan, Jathiya, and Ahqaf.

According to a Prophetic tradition Hawamim constitute the gist of the Holy Qur'an. The series is the crown of the Holy Qur'an and its fragrant flowers. God bestows His Bounties upon the reciter of these Verses as well as his neighbors, relatives, and friends and Divine Throne ask for his forgiveness.1

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 1 - 3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

1. Ha Mim.
2. The Revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient.
3. The Forgiver of sin, the Acceptor of repentance, the Severe in chastisement, the Bestower [***of many a Bounty***]. ***There is no god but Allah, to Him is the final return*** [***of all***].

As per a number of traditions, the interpretation of the detached letters is solely known by God Almighty.2

However, according to some other traditions and taking into account that following these letters which concern the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, God Almighty tells disbelievers that Divine Revelation is composed of the same letters of alphabet available to them and challenges them to produce similar Verses.

It is worthy of note that many a discussion are to be found in the openings of a number of foregoing Chapters, e.g. Baqara, Al 'Imran, and A'raf.

Furthermore, according to a number of traditions and many a words of its exeget, the first two letters of the opening of the Chapter in question are interpreted as Divine Names beginning with these two letters. As per a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), the twain letters in question are interpreted as Hamid ("Praiseworthy") and Majid ("All-Glorious").3

Some exegets have also interpreted "***H***" as Divine Names like Hamid ("the Praiseworthy"), Halim ("the Clement"), and Hannan ("the Most Compassionate") and "***M***" as those like Malik ("the Sovereign"), Malik ("the Lord"), and Majid ("All-Glorious").

"H" and ***"M"*** might as well allude to Divine Hakimiyya ("Sovereignty") and Malikiyyat ("Lordship"). It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas that Ha Mim is one of the Most Beautiful Divine Names.4

It is evident that these interpretations are not inconsistent and the contextual meaning of the Verse in question may designate them all.

The Qur'anic Verses opening with the phrase

"Revelation of the Book" (***tanzil al-kitab***)

make mention of Divine Names and Attributes among which mention may be made of the following:

The Revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise5***;***
The Revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient6***;***
The Revelation from [***Allah***]***, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful***7***;***
The Revelation [***is***] ***sent down by the Omnipotent, the Most Merciful***8***;***
[***It is***] ***sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise***9***;***
A Revelation from the Lord of the worlds10***.***

Thus, the origin of Revelation is the Possessor of Omnipotence, Wisdom, Mercy, Lordship, and worthy of all praise and glorification.

According the Holy Qur'an, Divine Forgiveness is bestowed upon believers for a number of reasons, including:

Faith:

(***"We have believed in our Lord that He may forgive us,"***11)***;***

Fearing God Almighty:

(***"If you fear Allah, He will forgive you,"***12)***;***

Following Prophets:

(*"If you follow me, He will forgive you,"*[13])*;*

Pardoning and forgiving people:

(*"Let them pardon and forgive... and Allah will forgive you,"*[14])*;*

Lending interest free loan to people:

(*"If you lend Allah a loan... He will forgive you,"*[15])*;*

Jihad:

(*"... you fight in the Cause of Allah... He will forgive you... ,*[16])*;*

Worship:

(*"If you worship Allah... He will forgive you,"*[17])*;*

Avoiding grave sins:

(*"If you avoid grave sins... We shall expiate from you your sins,"*[18])*;*

Invoking God Almighty, asking for forgiveness, repentance:

(*"... I have wronged myself... then He forgave him,"*[19])*;*

Saints' invocations to God Almighty for man:

(*"O our father! Ask forgiveness* [*from Allah*] *for our sins,"*[20]).

The Revelation of the Book, Divine Warning and Forgiveness all aim at man's perfection. The Book, the Law, Reckoning, Chastisement, and Forgiveness are all due in their own right.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 4

مَا يُجَادِلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلا يَغْرُرْكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلادِ

4. None disputes in the Ayat (***Verses, Signs***) ***of Allah but those who disbelieve. Therefore, let not their ability of going about here and there through the land deceive you.***

The Arabic word ***jadal*** literally designates "twisting a rope" but it is figuratively applied to disputations in which the parties attempt to defeat the other party through twisting in disputes. It is better avoided in scholarly and doctrinal issues unless the parties make use of proper arguments.

Following making reference to the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an by God Almighty and making mention of Divine Attributes that arouse fear and hope, the blessed Verse in question treats of those who resort to disputation and aggression against Divine Verses thus depicting their fate:

"Non disputes in the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah but those who disbelieve."

It is true that they may possess force and power, but:

"Let not their ability of going about here and there through the land deceive you."

They may have pomp and hue and cry for a few days, but they shall tread the road to perdition like bubbles or ashes against gale.

It is worthy of note that the word mujadala does not connote a pejorative sense at all times, but it is worthy of praise in case it is applied within the context of following the path of Truth substantiated by sensibility for expressing realities and guiding the ignorant.

Nevertheless, it is evil in case it happens to rely on false arguments stemming from prejudice, ignorance, and vanity aiming at deceiving people. It would be of interest to say that it is employed in the Holy Qur'an in both senses.

It is once used in 16:125:

"And argue with them in a way that is better."

It is also employed in its pejorative sense in the Verse in question and elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an.

The Arabic word ***taqallub*** derives from q-l-b "change, alter, transform," but the former is employed ad hoc in the sense of dominance and conquest of lands and regions and also frequentation in them.

The blessed Verse in question suggests that the Noble Prophet (S) and early Muslims the majority of whom were from the deprived stratum of the society are not supposed to attribute to tyrant disbelievers their financial, political, and social power and influence as tokens of their truthfulness or real might since the passage of time reveals that such people have been so weak against Divine chastisement like withered leaves against autumn gale.

Arrogant and tyrant disbelievers today try to intimidate the oppressed and the deprived of the world through resorting to a series of attempts, political visits, propaganda, conferences, military maneuvers, pacts and contracts with their allies so as to create the requisite atmosphere for achieving their vicious goals.

However, believers are supposed to be aware of their plots rather than being deceived by such stratagems nor are they supposed to be intimidated by them.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 5

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ لِيَأْخُذُوهُ وَجَادَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ
فَأَخَذْتُهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ

5.** [**Meccan disbelievers and also**] **the people Noah and the Confederates after them denied** [**their Prophets**] **before these; and every nation plotted against their Messenger to seize him and disputed by means of falsehood to refute therewith the Truth. Therefore, I seized them** [**by My Wrath**] **and** [**behold**] **how My Chastisement was!

In their confrontations with Divinely appointed Prophets all disbelieving opponents shared the same goal but they were ignorant of Prophets' Divine Support;

([***behold***] ***how My Chastisement was!***).

The fate of a number of peoples of old who were astray and wrong doing are thus mentioned in terse but decisive clause:

"the people Noah and the Confederates after them belied [***their Prophets***] ***before these."***

The word Confederate (ahzab) alludes to the peoples of 'Ad, Thamud, Pharaoh, Lot, and the like alluded to in 38:12-13:

"Before them the people of Noah, 'Ad, and Pharaoh the man of stakes, and Thamud and the people of Lot and the Dwellers of the Wood: such ere the confederates."

The confederates cooperated with each other to belie the Divinely appointed Prophets whose Calls were inconsistent with the confederates' illicit interests, lusts, and passions.

They were not content with these but:

"Every nation plotted against their Messenger to seize him."

They even stepped further and resorted to falsehood to cast a veil over Truth and persisted in misleading people:

(***"and disputed by means of falsehood to refute therewith the Truth"***).

The Arabic verbal form ***yudhidu*** derives from d-h-d ("disprove, refute, obliterate"). However, their stratagems did not last since God Almighty seized them in time and chastised them.

Behold Divine torment:

(*“I seized them* [*by My Wrath*] *and* [*behold*] *how My Chastisement was!”*).

The ruins of their cities are visible on your routes and their evil fate is recorded in historical books and the hearts of the pious. Behold and take lessons. These Meccan tyrant disbelievers and Arab wrong doing polytheists will not have a better fate in store for them unless they change their course and think twice about their beliefs and conducts.

The Verse in question presents a summary of the stratagems of the rebellious Confederates: belying, denial, conspiracy against men of Truth, making attempts to slay them, incessant propaganda for misleading the masses.

Arab polytheists resorted to the same stratagems against the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) hence there is no wonder that the Holy Qur’an warns them against entanglement with the fate of ancient people.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 6

وَكَذَٰلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ

6. Thus [***the Confederates were chastised in this world***] ***has the Word of your Lord been justified against those who disbelieved that they will be the dwellers of the Fire.***

The following Verse makes mention of this worldly and otherworldly chastisements saying:

“Thus [***the Confederates were chastised in this world***] ***has the Word of your Lord been justified against those who disbelieved that they will be the dwellers of the Fire.”***

The outward meaning of the Verse is broad in scope encompassing obdurate disbelievers from every people. It is not as a number of exegets have deemed a particular reference to Meccan disbelievers.

It is evident that the justification of Divine Command regarding this people is consequent to their incessant willful commitment of sins and faults.

It is surprising that some exegets like Fakhr Razi maintain that the Verse in question serves as an argument for the preordained fate of different peoples and divesting them of free choice whereas if sectarian biases could be removed, they could evidently and conveniently notice that God Almighty preordains such dire fate for them when they commit all kinds of wrong and crime.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 7

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَحْمَةً وَعِلْماً فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

7. Those who bear the Throne and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness [***of God***] ***for those who believe*** [***saying***]***: "Our Lord! You comprehend all things in Mercy and Knowledge, so forgive those who repent and follow Your Path and save them from the torment of Fire!***

It is a recurrent Qur'anic theme that deprived believers should never conceive that the opportunities available to wrong doing, tyrant, and disbelieving individuals and groups indicate their final felicity or victory.

To expose the falsity of such conception maintained by narrow minded people as per which they regard material opportunities as their spiritual truth, the Holy Qur'an alludes to the accounts of former peoples and makes reference to evident instances such as the powerful people of Pharaoh in Egypt, people of Nimrod in Babylon, and peoples of Noah, 'Ad, and Thamud in Iraq, Hijaz, and Sham lest deprived and destitute believers feel weak and deficient and be intimidated and weak by faithless tyrants' pomp and apparent power.

God Almighty does not immediately chastise anyone committing sins as it is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And We appointed a fixed time for their destruction"[21]***;***
"So give a respite to the disbelievers; deal gently with them for a while"[22]***;***
"We postpone the chastisement only so that they may increase in sinfulness, and for them is a disgracing torment"[23]***.***

In short, such respites aim to give ultimatum to disbelievers, test believers, and increasing of sins by those who have blocked all their ways of return.

A similar sense of humiliation against tyrant and materially powerful governments may be perceived by some materially underdeveloped believing nations.

The aforementioned Qur'anic arguments may decisively serve against such false conceptions. Furthermore, it should be explained to them that their deprived state mainly stems from those tyrants' oppression and if they sever the fetters and shackles of bondage and oppression they may strive hard to compensate their underdevelopment.

"Those who bear the Throne and those around it glorify the praises of their Lord and believe in Him and ask forgiveness [***of God***] ***for those who believe."***

The tone of the preceding Verses indicate that they were revealed when Muslims constituted a deprived minority and their enemies were at the zenith of power and dominance and enjoyed many opportunities.

The occasion of the Revelation of the Verses in question is to bear glad tidings to true believers that they are never alone, they should not feel estranged since the bearers of Divine Throne, the Arch-Angels,

support you and always invoke God Almighty to make you victorious in this world and the Hereafter and it is the best support for believers in this world and the world to come.

They say:

"Our Lord! You comprehend all things in Mercy and Knowledge [i.e., you are aware of Your servants' sins and You are compassionate toward them], so forgive those who repent and follow Your Path and save them from the torment of Fire!"

On the one hand, they say unto believers that you who worship God and glorify Him are not alone since before you, the Arch-Angels who are closest to God Almighty, bear His Throne, circumambulate It, and glorify Him.

On the other hand, it warns disbelievers that their belief or disbelief is of no significance since God Almighty is Needless of others. So many angels glorify him that even their glorification may not be imagined by anyone; however, He is Needless of their glorification.

It also enlightens believers that they are not alone in this world. Inasmuch as you happen to constitute a minority, the Most Omnipotent of the Invisible Powers of the world and the bearers of Divine Throne render you support.

The bearers of the Throne invoke God Almighty at all times to comprehend you in His Infinite Mercy and Compassion, absolve you of your sins, and keep you from the torments of Hell.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 8 - 9

رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

8. "Our Lord! And make them enter the abodes in gardens which you have promised them and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their offspring! Indeed, You are the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.
9. "And [O Lord!] save them from the sins [and the recompense of their evil deeds], and whomsoever You save from the sins that Day, him indeed, You have taken into Mercy." And that is the supreme deliverance.

Deliverance does not lie in mundane welfare rather in fear of God Almighty.

"And whomsoever You save from the sins that Day, him indeed, You have taken into Mercy. And

that is the supreme deliverance.”

Resuming the invocations of the bearers of Divine Throne, the blessed Verse says:

“Our Lord! And make them enter the abodes in gardens which you have promised them and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their offspring! Indeed, You are the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.”

The Verse opens with:

“Our Lord!”

which indicates the humble request of the bearers of the Throne and the Arch-Angels who are closest to God Almighty. To invoke him to comprehend believers in His Boundless Mercy, they lay emphasis on His Lordship.

They not only invoke God Almighty to save believers from Hell but also ask Him to make them as well as their fathers, spouses, and offspring enter the everlasting gardens of Paradise. The Divine Promise mentioned in these Verses is recurrently declared by Prophets to people.

Division of believers into two groups indicates that some of them stand foremost and make every effort to obey Divine Commands. The other group on a par with the aforesaid ones but owing to their relative adherence to the first group and their attribution thereof will be taken into Divine Mercy as invoked by angels.

In their fourth invocation, the angels ask God Almighty:

“Save them from the sins and whomsoever You save from the sins that Day, him indeed, You have taken into Mercy.”

Thus they end their invocations:

“This is the supreme deliverance.”

The supreme deliverance is that sins are absolved from man, torment and evils are kept away from him, he is taken into Divine Mercy, he enters everlasting Paradise in which he is accompanied by his beloved relatives.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 10

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادَوْنَ لَمَقْتُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَقْتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ

10. Those who disbelieve will be addressed [***in Hell***]***: “Allah’s Wrath*** [***against you***] ***was greater***

towards you than your aversion towards one another when you were called to the Faith but you used to refuse."

The verbal for yunadun is attested twice in the Holy Qur'an both of which are employed for humiliating the people of Hell, the other instance is:

"They are those who are called from a remote place,"[24].

The blessed Verse in question treats of the manner of Divine Wrath against disbelievers so as to shed further light through symmetrical juxtaposition.

The blessed Verse says:

"Those who disbelieve will be addressed [***in Hell***]***: 'Allah's Wrath*** [***against you***] ***was greater towards you than your aversion towards one another when you were called to the Faith but you used to refuse'."***

Who is calling them in this manner? The angels responsible for inflicting torment upon disbelievers are apparently calling them thus to reproach and disgrace them whereas angels of Mercy are at all times prepared to pay homage and respect to the believing pious.

Some exegets have maintained that some disbelievers call their like; however, the first interpretation sounds more appropriate. It is worthy of note that the call shall be voiced on the Day of Resurrection as the following Verses evidently bear witness to the same.

The word ***maqt*** literally designates "hatred, detestation, aversion." The blessed Verse indicates that inasmuch as faithless people severely detest themselves, Divine Wrath shall be beyond their aversion.

What is intended by disbelievers' aversion and enmity against themselves? There are two interpretations for it.

According to the first interpretation, they have been their most bitter enemies of themselves since they turned away from those who called them to believe in Divine Unity. They not only turned away from the Lights of Divine Guidance but they also shattered them.

Is there any enmity more severe than blocking for oneself the path to everlasting bliss in exchange for following concupiscence and enjoying the transient mundane life?

As per the present interpretation, the clause:

"when you were called to the Faith but you used to refuse"

reflects the manner of their wrath and enmity against themselves.

According to the other interpretation, their enmity and wrath comprehends them on the Day of Resurrection, since they perceive the consequences of their acts there which will lead to their regret and repentance.

They will cry out biting their hands out of sorrow and regret saying:

"The Day when the wrong doer will bite at his hands"[25]
"and the disbeliever will say: 'Woe to me! Would that I were dust!'"
"And sharp is the sight of this Day"[26]***,***
"The Day when all the secrets will be examined"[27]***,***
"And when the pages of deeds of every person are laid open"[28]***,***
"You yourself are sufficient as a reckoner against you this Day"[29].

Thus they condemn themselves decisively and turn away in detestation and flee from themselves.

Now it is called:

"Allah's Wrath [***against you***] ***was greater towards you than your aversion towards one another when you were called to the Faith but you used to refuse."***

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 11

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَتَّنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَأَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

11. They will say: "Our Lord! You have made us to die twice and You have given us life twice! Now we confess to our sins, then is there any way to get out [***of Hell***]***?"***

Dying twice apparently refers to death at the end of mundane life and the one at the end of Purgatory. Likewise, giving life twice indicates those in Purgatory and on the Day of Resurrection.

It is worthy of note that upon observation of the circumstances on the Day of Resurrection as well as Divine against them, sinners awake from their long sleep of neglect and reflect upon finding a way out, saying:

"O Lord! You made us to die twice and gave us life twice! Now we comprehend everything following death and coming to life again. Now we confess to our sins. Is there any way out of the Hell and returning to the world for compensating past errors and mistakes?"

All veils of vanity and neglect will be cast away and man will perceive the truth and will have no alternative but to confess to his sins.

In their mundane life, they persisted in their denial of Resurrection, mocking Prophets who called them to

believing in God Almighty. There will be no room for denial when they see their consecutive death and life.

Their emphasis on the consecutiveness of death and life may make a reference to the view as per which they say:

"O Lord! You are the Owner of death and life, You are Able to return us to the world so that we may compensate for our past misdeeds."

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 12

ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ وَإِنْ يُشْرَكْ بِهِ تُؤْمِنُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ

12. "This [***torment***] ***is because when Allah Alone was invoked*** [***as the One God***] ***you disbelieved, but when partners were associated with Him, you believed! Therefore,*** [***now***] ***the judgment is only with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great!"***

To make such ignorant disbelievers and polytheists lose their hope for ever, the closes with:

"Therefore, [***now***] ***the judgment is only with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great!"***

There is no other judge at the Tribunal, since He is the Most High, the Most Great. He will not be subjugated by anyone, nor will He be affected by any recommendation. Offering ransom, indemnity, or support may not alter His Decision.

He is the Absolute Sovereign and all beings submit to His Command. There will be no way out against His Decree.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 13 - 14

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقاً وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُنِيبُ

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ

13. It is He Who shows you His Ayat (***Verses, Signs***) ***and sends down provision for you from the sky. And none remembers but those who turn in repentance.***
14. Therefore, call you upon Allah making [***your***] ***faith pure for Him; however much the disbelievers may dislike*** [***it***].

The world of existence abounds in tokens of Divine Unity. Why should man turn to other beings besides God Almighty? In these blessed Verses people are called to believe in Divine Unity saying that merely those who turn in repentance remember God Almighty.

The clause:

"However much the disbelievers may dislike [***it***]***"***

is attested thrice and the clauses

"However much the polytheists may dislike [***it***]***"***

and

"However much the sinners may dislike [***it***]***"***

are to be found twice. Such attestations indicate that we are not supposed to satisfy disbelievers, polytheists, and sinners and desist from carrying out our duties for the sake of their displeasure.

It is noteworthy that the last two blessed Verses serve as arguments substantiating the issues suggested in the form of admonitions and warnings in the foregoing Verse. They serve as arguments for Divine Unity and Lordship and refutation of polytheism and idolatry.

Verse 13 opens thus:

"It is He Who shows you His Ayat (***Verses, Signs***)***."***
"The judgment is only with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great!"

In this blessed Verse, an argument is produced against declining disbelievers request as to getting out of Hell and returning to the world.

It designates that when they were called to believe in Divine Unity, they denied the call and persisted in their disbelief, but whenever some people associated partners with Him, they submitted to them and believed in their polytheistic beliefs.

It is to say that they frowned upon whoever made mention of Divine Unity, purity, fearing God, and submission to Divine Will, but they rejoiced at polytheism and impurity. Consequently, they may have no better fate.

Now a question may be raised here as to the nexus between the reply and returning to the world. However, the contextual meaning of the Verse demonstrates that such deeds of theirs were not sporadic and transient rather they were likewise at all times.

Consequently, if they returned they would resume their misdeeds and such faith and submission on the

Day of Judgment are out of necessity rather than being genuine. Furthermore, their past disbelief, misdeeds and evil intentions necessitate their everlasting dwelling in Hell. Thus their return to the world would be impossible.

It is worthy of note that that such is the circumstance of those in whose hearts disbelief, polytheism and committing sins are deeply rooted. They are those who were disgusted at hearing the Name of the One God and rejoiced at hearing the names of Idols.

"And when Allah Alone is mentioned the hearts of those who believe not in the Hereafter are filled with disgust and when besides Hi are mentioned, behold they rejoice!" [30].

Such circumstances are not restricted to the time of the Noble Prophet (S) rather there are ignorant in our time who turn away from faith, Divine Unity, and fearing God and whenever they hear disbelief, discord, and corruption, they turn to them.

Thus, according to a number traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt (as), the Verse in question is interpreted as referring to the question of guardianship (wilaya) at which some people are disgusted rather they rejoice at hearing the names of its opponents.

It goes without saying that the interpretation in question makes mention of a number of instances rather than referring to all the instances of the blessed Verse in question.

It makes also a reference to the signs upon the horizon and those upon the soul abounding in the world of existence. It alludes to the wonderful images found in the world of existence and whoever does not reflect upon such images will resemble one of the same.

Mention is then made of one of these signs:

"He sends down provision for you from the sky."

The life giving rain drops, the invigorating sunshine giving life to all beings, and the air which enlivens all plants and animals are all sent down from the sky. We know that these are the main means of life and other means are secondary to them.

The Verse thus closes: despite all the signs abounding in the world of existence, blind eyes and the hearts over which a veil is cast fail to perceive anything:

"only those who turn toward God in repentance may remember"

and absolve their hearts and souls from impurities.

The following Verse concludes that now that you comprehend the circumstances,

"call you upon Allah making [***your***] ***faith pure for Him."***

Believers are encouraged herein to arise and erase polytheists' idols through your faith and remove them from your thought, culture, and society.

It is to note that such act will disgust biased and obdurate disbelievers, but believers are supposed to have heart and purify their faith

"however much the disbelievers may dislike** [**it**]**."

In an environment in which idolaters constitute the majority, Divine Unity sounds disgusting to them like sunrise among bats; however, believers are supposed to ignore such ill-mannered and transient reactions, proceed decisively, and raise the banner of Divine Unity and sincere devotion everywhere.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 15 - 16

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ

يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ لا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ

***15.** [**He is**] **the Owner of High Ranks and Degrees, the Owner of the Throne. He sends the angel of Revelation** [**Faithful Spirit, Gabriel**] **by His Command to any of His servants He wills that he may warn** [**people**] **of the Day of Mutual Meeting** [**and Resurrection**].*
16. The Day when they will come out, nothing of them will be concealed from Allah.** [**It shall be called:**] **"Whose is the sovereignty of this Day?"** [**A call shall answer:**] **"It is Allah's, the One, the All-Subjugator!"

Exaltation and owning high ranks fall into two types:

1. Spatial, as in:

"And when Abraham... raised the foundations of the House** [**of Ka'ba**]**... "31**,**

2. In terms of station, as in:

"Allah will exalt in degree those of you who believe"32.

The preceding Verse called people to sincere devotion in matters of faith, but the present Verse is saying that God Almighty will exalt you in proportion to your degree of sincere devotion. He is the Owner of High Ranks and Degrees.

This interpretation assumes that the word ***rafi'*** designates "promoter, exalter." However, a number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that the word in question indicates

"exalted."

Consequently, rafi' al-darajat makes a reference to Divine Exalted Ranks and Degrees. He is Exalted in His Omniscience and Omnipotence. All His Perfect Attributes are so Exalted that they defy man's limited knowledge and intellect.

The blessed Verse adds:

"He is the Owner of the Throne,"

i.e., He wields His Sway over all the world of existence. He has no rival in His Sovereignty which bears testimony to the fact that determination of His servants' ranks are as per their merits and they rest within His Control.

The contextual meaning of Throne was treated in the preceding Verse and there is no need to reiterate the exposition.

The third Divine Attribute is that:

"He sends the angel of Revelation** [**Faithful Spirit, Gabriel**] **by His Command to any of His servants He wills."

The Spirit in question is the Holy Qur'an and the rank of prophethood and Revelation that invigorates hearts and resembles human soul and body. His Omnipotence and Owning High Ranks and Degrees necessitate that He informs men of their duties.

The expression is of interest as per which Revelation is likened to the Spirit that engenders life, motion, jihad, and development.

Qur'anic exegets have presented different interpretations for

"Spirit"

herein, but the contextual meaning of the word in this Verse and elsewhere, i.e.:

"He sends down the angels with the Spirit of His Command to whom of His servants He wills** [**saying**]**: 'Warn mankind that there is no god but Allah, so fear Me,'"[33]

and

"Thus We have sent to you the Spirit of Our Command, you knew not what is the Book, nor what is faith?"[34]

addressed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), all bear testimony to the fact that the word

“Spirit”

ad hoc designates Revelation, the Holy Qur’an, and Divine obligations.

The expression:

“by His Command”

indicates that if the angel of Revelation responsible for proclamation is this Spirit, it is imparting Divine Word rather than its own.

The expression

“to any of His servants He wills”

does not indicate that He vests the Bounty of Revelation to anyone without due measure, since Divine Will is the same as His Omniscience.

The point is that He vests Revelation with the one whom He regards worthy of such state, as the same is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

“Allah knows best with whom to place His Message”[35].

As per a number of traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt (as), the word

“Spirit”

in the Verse in question is interpreted as “The Holy Spirit” as belonging to the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (as); however, this interpretation is not inconsistent with the above since the Holy Spirit is the same sacred Spirit and the exalted spiritual rank vested perfectly in Prophets and the Infallible Imams (as) whose manifestations are many a time found in other people and whenever the manifestation of the Holy Spirit renders them aid, they may utter extraordinary words and carry out deeds of significance.

It is worthy of note that the preceding Verses treated of sending down rain and mundane provisions but the Verses in question make mention of sending down Revelation and spiritual sustenance.

Now let us proceed to the question of the goal of sending down the Holy Spirit upon prophets. Why do they tread the long path which entails many vicissitudes?

The answer is to be found at the end of the blessed Verse in question:

“that he may warn [***people***] ***of the Day of Mutual Meeting*** [***and Resurrection***]***.”***

It is the Day on which servants meet their Lord through inward intuition, when the past and future

generations, the oppressed and the oppressors, the wrong doers and the wronged, and men and angels meet.

It shall be on this Day that man shall stand at Divine Tribunal with his acts, words, and deeds. The goal of sending down all Scriptures and Divine plans is to warn servants against the Day of great meeting.

It is noteworthy that the unusual name

“day of meeting”

is employed in this Verse to designate the Day of Resurrection. Verse 16 provides further exposition for such a Day.

The last two Verses treat of a number of characteristics of Resurrection each of which is more moving than the others.

Verse 16 opens with the clause:

“The Day when they will come out.”

It is on this Day that all veils will be removed. All material obstacles like mountains shall be removed and according to a Qur’anic expression, the earth shall be:

“a level smooth plain”[36].

All men shall leave their graves.

It is a:

“Day when all secrets will be manifest”[37]

and

“When the earth throws out its burdens”[38].

It is a Day:

“When the pages [***of deeds of everyone***] ***are laid open”***[39].

It is:

“the Day when man will see that [***the deeds***] ***which his hands have sent forth”***[40].
“Nay, it has become manifest to them what they had been concealing before”[41].

On that Day human organs and even the earth on which deeds were taken place

"will declare its information** [**about all that happened over it of good or evil**]**"42.

In short, all men with all his being and identity shall appear on that great scene and nothing shall remain concealed:

"they all shall appear before Allah"43.

In order to grasp what will happen on that Day, it would suffice to imagine such scene in this world, when nothing will be concealed from others. What chaos will prevail among people? How will the ties of relationship be severed?

The blessed Verse further adds that:

"nothing of them will be concealed from Allah."

In this mundane world nothing is concealed from God, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient. The One Whose Existence is Boundless is not restricted by any impediment in His Pure Essence and apparent and concealed and visible and invisible are on a par to Him.

The other point is Divine Absolute Sovereignty as reflected in this blessed Verse:

*"[**It shall be called:**] **"Whose is the sovereignty of this Day?"***

The answer to the question is thus provided:

"It is Allah's, the One, the All-Subjugator!"

Who asks the question? A number of Qur'anic exegets main that it is God Almighty Who asks the question and all believers and disbelievers answer.44 Some also hold that God Almighty both asks the question and answers to it.45 A number of exegets also believe that the Divine Caller asks the question and produces the reply.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 17

الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

17. This Day shall every person be recompensed for what he earned. This Day no injustice** [**shall be done to anybody**]. **Verily, Allah is Swift in reckoning.

All mankind shall be subject to reckoning on the Day of Resurrection and the recompense shall be based on deeds.

The blessed Verse in question treats of the fourth characteristic of the Day of Recompense saying that

each and every person shall be recompensed for what he earned. Divine Omniscience, Omnipotence, Lordship, and All-Subjugation all explicitly indicate this awe and hope inspiring truth.

The fifth characteristic is that:

***“This Day no injustice** [**shall be done to anybody**].”*

How may injustice be done to any one since it stems from either ignorance or impotence, but He is Omniscient, Lord, and All-Subjugator. Consequently no wrong shall be done on the Day of Resurrection which is the Day of Divine Judgment.

The sixth and the last characteristic is the swiftness in reckoning the deeds of servants as mentioned at the end of the blessed Verse in question:

“Allah is Swift in reckoning.”

He is so swift in reckoning that as per a tradition:

“Verily, Allah reckons all His servants’ recompenses in the twinkling of an eye.”

Having admitted to the embodiment of human acts and the traces of good and evil deeds, the question of reckoning is already solved. Do the reckoning technological systems of this world require time to produce the results?

The repetition of the expression:

“swift in reckoning”

in different Qur’anic Verses may suggest that some satanic disbelievers may tempt simple people that the reckoning of the deeds of all mankind down the millennia is not so facile. Furthermore, the expression warns all mankind that no respite shall be granted to anyone in the manner that extended respites may be granted to criminals to examine their records.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 18 - 19

وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْآزِفَةِ إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ كَاظِمِينَ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلا شَفِيعٍ يُطَاعُ

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ

18.** [**O Prophet!**] **warn them of the Day** [**of Resurrection**] **that is drawing near, when the hearts** [**out of intensity of fear**] **will be choking the throats and they can neither return them to their chests

nor can they throw* [*them*] *out.* [*On that Day*] *there will be no friend, nor an intercessor for the wrong-doers who could be given heed to.
19. Allah knows the fraud of the eyes and all that the breasts conceal.

Death and the Day of Resurrection are drawing near. Let us prepare ourselves for them. These two Verses resume the depiction of Resurrection. The two Verses and the following Ones treat of other characteristics of Resurrection and awe inspiring incidents that make believers to deeply ponder.

Verse 18 opens with the clause:

"Warn them of the Day that is drawing near."

The word ***azifa*** indicates "near." What an unusual name!

It is used in lieu of

"Day of Resurrection"

so as the ignorant may not say:

"the Day of Resurrection is too far away. Do not preoccupy yourselves with such empty words."

It is noteworthy that compared to the Resurrection, the life of the world is but a transient moment and since not specific date has been imparted to Prophets regarding the same, one has to be prepared for it at all times.

The other depiction is that:

"when the hearts* [*out of intensity of fear*] *will be choking the throats and they can neither return them to their chests nor can they throw* [*them*] *out."

Confronting with dire straits, man may feel that his heart is being displaced, as if it will come out of his throat. The Arabic expression for the same is "*the hearts will be choking the throats*" (balaghat al-qulub al-hanajir).

The English equivalent would be "to reach the end of one's tether." The expression is quite figurative, though it literally designates that the heart which pumps blood in veins is displaced and reaches the throat.

The word

"heart"

may connote soul, that is the soul reaches the throat as if the soul gradually exits the body and a little of it is still there.

At any rate, the expression indicates that the fear and anxiety caused by Divine reckoning and fear of being disgraced among all people and entanglement with an excruciating pain from which there is no release inspires such awe in heart that it defies expression.

The third depiction illustrates that their being abounds in grief and sorrow but they may not express it. The word kasim is a present participle and derives from k-s-m which literally indicates tying a skin bag full of water but it is figuratively applied to people who are wrathful but owing to some reasons abstain from venting their wrath.

Afflicted with excruciating grieves and sorrows, one may cry out and alleviate the pain to some extent; but unfortunately there will be no such opportunity on that Day when all secrets will be exposed at Divine Tribunal and in the presence of all people. Will crying be of any avail then?

According to the fourth depiction,

"[***On that Day***] ***there will be no friend."***

All fair weather friends who used to pretend that they were faithful, sincere, and devoted friends will be preoccupied with their own affairs. There shall be no one on that Day to sympathize with anyone else.

As per the fifth depiction,

"nor [***there will be***] ***an intercessor for the wrong-doers who could be given heed to."***

The point is that true intercessors like Prophets and Saints shall intercede upon Divine Permission. Consequently, polytheists and idolaters may not expect their gods and idols to intercede on their behalf.

The sixth Divine Attribute is depicted in Verse 19 which also serves as a depiction of the manner of Resurrection, saying:

"Allah knows the fraud of the eyes and all that the breasts conceal."

God Almighty is Aware of the surreptitious movement of eyes and the secrets of hearts and on that Day judges concerning man's deeds. His Omniscience renders the days of sinners into shadows.

Upon being asked as to the meaning of the Verse in question, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Have you not seen that at times man looks at something but pretends that he is not looking at it? Such glances are surreptitious."[46]

Looking at people's honor, i.e., wives and daughters, or looking at other forbidden things may not be concealed from God Almighty:

"not even the weight of an atom or less than that or greater escapes His Omniscience in the

heavens or in the earth"[47]*.*

According to a Prophetic tradition, one of his Companions sat in the presence of the Noble Prophet (S) beside one of the bitterest enemies of Islam.

When the latter obtained assurance of safety from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and left, the Companion inquired:

"Why did you not command us to behead him prior to his obtaining the assurance of safety from you?"

The Messenger of God (S) replied:

"Prophets never cast surreptitious looks."[48]

It is needless to say that there are different types of surreptitious looks: at times, looks may be cast surreptitiously at women outside the circle of close kinship and at times it may aim at humiliating, finding faults, or hatching plots and satanic ruses.

If man knew that such precise reckoning will be carried out on the Day of Resurrection and even glances and thought will be all subject to scrutiny, utmost fear of God would be engendered in him and such faith in the Hereafter and Divine reckoning on the Day of Resurrection would affect the improvement of human souls.

It is said that following the completion of his studies at the hawza ("the educational religious institution") of Najaf, an eminent scholar intended to return to his hometown. Upon bidding farewell to his professor, he asked for an admonition and the latter said:

"Following taking all these troubles, my last admonition is God's Word. Never forget the Verse 'Knows he not that Allah does see [***what he does***]*'*[49]***?"***

It is to note that from the viewpoint of a true believer, all the world is God's audience. He does see everything. Remembering the same suffices man to abstain from committing sins.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 20

وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لا يَقْضُونَ بِشَيْءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

20. And Allah judges with truth while those to whom they invoke besides Him cannot judge anything. Certainly, Allah! He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

Judging with truth is one of Divine Acts. The seventh depiction of Resurrection is mentioned in this Verse as one of Divine Attributes:

“Allah judges with truth while those to whom they invoke besides Him cannot judge anything.”

On that Day, God shall be the only Judge and he will not judge with untruth, since wrong judgment springs from ignorance but His Omniscience comprehends even the inward secrets of hearts. Wrong judgment may also stem from inability or need but He is Free from such incompetence.

It is worthy of note that the Verse in question also serves as an argument substantiating Divine Unity since One Who is Worthy of being worshipped shall be the Arbitrator but idols are devoid of any usefulness in this world nor will they be the arbitrators on the Day of Resurrection.

Thus, how could they be worthy of being worshipped? It is also noteworthy that Judgment with Truth embraces a wide range of meaning comprehending all the world of existence, becoming, and law making.

Likewise the expression:

“decree” (***qada***)

is employed in the Holy Qur’an in both senses:

“And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him”[50].

It indicates His legislative judgment.

It is said elsewhere:

“When He has decreed something, He says to it only: ‘Be?’ and it is”[51].

Finally, to lay emphasis on the foregoing points raised in the preceding Verses, the Verse in question closes thus:

“Certainly, Allah! He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.”

Seeing and hearing in the true and strict sense of the word indicates that He hears and sees everything and Omniscience solely belongs to His Pure Essence. It emphasizes his Omniscience and the fact that His Judgment is with truth since one who is not all-hearing and all-wise may not judge with truth.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 21

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَاراً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاقٍ

21. Have they not traveled in the land and seen what was the end of those who were before

them? They were superior to them in strength and in the traces in the land. But Allah seized them with chastisement [***out of His Wrath***] ***for their sins. And none had they to protect them from Allah*** [***'s Wrath***]*.*

Man is supposed to take lessons from history rather than take pride in his power and traces in the land. It is needless to say that preservation of the monuments of ancient generations will be required for generations to take lessons. Disbelievers' opposition to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) was due to their vanity for their power.

Thus the Holy Qur'an says:

"We destroyed those who were superior to you in strength and in the traces in the land."

The blessed Verse in question raises a question:

"Have they not traveled in the land and seen what the end of those who were before them was?"

This living history reminds men of the wrong doers' ruins of palaces, the disaster stricken cities of the rebellious, the rotten bones of those asleep in dust, and the palaces buried in the earth. All these decisive words depict a true picture of the genuine history of ancient peoples.

Thus the Verse proceeds:

"They were superior to them in strength and in the traces in the land."

The phrase:

"superior to them in strength"

indicates their political, military, economic, and possibly their scientific and technological power.

The phrase:

"in the traces in the land"

may demonstrate their great agricultural developments as it is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Do they not travel in the land and see what the end of those before them was? They were superior to them in strength and they tilled the earth and populated it in greater numbers than these have done"[52]*.*

It may also make a reference to well founded and solid constructions by a number of ancient peoples in mountains and plains as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an regarding the people of 'Ad:

"Do you build high palaces on every high place, while you do not live in them? And do you get

***for yourselves palaces as if you will live therein forever"*[53].**

The dire fate of the rebellious people is expressed briefly:

"But Allah seized them with chastisement* [*out of His Wrath*] *for their sins. And none had they to protect them from Allah* [*'s Wrath*]*."

Neither their large number nor their power, nor glory, nor immense worldly possessions could impede Divine Chastisement.

The word:

"seize"

is recurrently employed in the Holy Qur'an in the sense of "chastise" since in order to inflict a severe punishment, the perpetrator is first seized and then they will be chastised.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 22

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

22. That* [*Divine Wrath*] *was because there came to them their Messengers with clear proofs but they disbelieved. Therefore, Allah seized them. Indeed He is All-Strong, Severe in chastisement.

Sending Prophets is a Divine tradition recorded in the history of mankind since God Almighty never chastises anyone without having given him the ultimatum.

The blessed Verse in question tersely makes mention of the foregoing points by saying that such Divine excruciating chastisement was because there came to them their Messengers with clear proofs but they denied them all.

They were not seized unaware nor were their disbelief and sin without warning, since Messengers recurrently (kanat ta'tihim) came to them but they failed to submit to Divine Commands. They shattered the lights of guidance, turned away from their compassionate Messengers, and at times they slew them.

Then God seized and chastised them since He is All-Strong and Severe in Chastisement. He is both the Most Compassionate of all the compassionate; however, at the time of Wrath, He is the Severest in Chastisement.

1. Tafsir Nimuna.
2. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.
3. Ma'ani al-Akhbar by Saduq, p. 22, Chapter on the meaning of the detached letters opening the Qur'anic Chapters (Bab Ma'ni al-Huruf al-Muqatta'a fi Awa'il al-Suwar).

4. Tafsir Qurtubi, under the blessed Verse in question.
5. 39:1
6. 40:2
7. 41:3
8. 36:5
9. 41:42
10. 26: 192
11. 20:73
12. 8:29
13. 3:31
14. 24:22
15. 64:17
16. 61:11-12
17. 71:3-4
18. 4:31
19. 28:16
20. 12:97
21. 18:59
22. 86:17
23. 3:178
24. 41:44
25. 25:27
26. 50:22
27. 86:9
28. 81:10
29. 17:14
30. 39:45
31. 2:127
32. 58:11
33. 16:2
34. 43:52
35. 6:124
36. 20:106
37. 86:9
38. 99:2
39. 81:10
40. 78:40
41. 6:28
42. 99:4
43. 14:21
44. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verses in question.
45. al-Mizan, under the Verses in question.
46. Tafsir Safi, under the verse in question.
47. 34:3
48. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5747.
49. 96:14
50. 17:23
51. 3:47

52. 30:9
53. 26:128-129

Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 23 - 45

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 23 - 25

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

23. And verily We sent Moses with Our Ayat** (**Verses, Signs**) **and a manifest authority.
24. To Pharaoh, Haman, and Korah, but they called** [**him**] **a sorcerer, a liar.
25. Then when he brought them the Truth from Us, they said: "Slay the sons of those who believe with him and let their women live" but** [**they knew not that**] **the plots of disbelievers are nothing but in vain.

Messengers had two weapons of significance against tyrants: the miracle of Divine Ayat and manifest authority. Prophetic missions mainly aim at struggling with the chiefs of corruption and disbelief who make use of force, government, political power, stratagems, mischief, cultural power, worldly possessions, and economic power.

Resuming the allusion to the dire fate of ancient peoples in the preceding Verses, the verses in question alludes to the story of Pharaoh, Haman, and Korah.

Verses 23 and 24 say:

"We sent Moses with our Ayat and manifest authority to Pharaoh, Haman, and Korah, but they said: 'He is a lying sorcerer.'"

Different interpretations have been produced by Qur'anic exegets as to the difference between Ayat and manifest authority. Some maintain that the former and the latter refer to manifest arguments and miracles respectively.

Some maintain that the former indicates all of Moses' miracles whereas the latter designate his prominent miracles such as his walking stick and illuminating hand which led to his manifest dominance over Pharaoh. Thus, Ayat refers to his miracles and manifest authority designates his solid and decisive arguments against the people of Pharaoh.

It is worthy of note that Moses possessed intellectual arguments and also wrought miracles which demonstrated his nexus with the supernatural; however, the stance of the people of Pharaoh was that they accused him of being a liar and a sorcerer.

They made use of such accusations against Ayat and miracles and disbelieved him against his logical arguments. It bears another testimony to the acceptability of the two interpretations in question. To refute the true arguments of men of truth, lords of disbelief have always made use of such accusations. Even today we find many instances of such false accusations.

It is noteworthy that three names have been mentioned in this Verse each of whom symbolize something: Pharaoh as the symbol of rebellion and tyrannical rule; Haman as the symbol of mischief and satanic stratagems; Korah as the symbol of material possessions, rebellion, and exploitation who left no stone unturned to preserve his wealth.

Thus Moses was divinely appointed to put an end to the oppression of tyrannical rules, the mischief of treacherous politicians, and transgressions of the arrogant rich and establish a society on the basis of justice and on a politically, culturally, and economically firm ground, but those whose illegitimate interests were in jeopardy rose against him.

Verse 25 exposes some of their mischievous stratagems saying:

"Then when he brought them the Truth from Us, they said: 'Slay the sons of those who believe with him and let their women live.'"

The expression reveals that slaying males and keeping females alive was not restricted to the time prior to Moses' birth but it recurred following his uprising and prophethood.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an that the Children of Israel said unto Moses (as):

"We had suffered troubles before you came to us."

The Children of Israel said it unto Moses following the conspiracies of the people of Pharaoh aiming at slaying believers' offspring.

It is worthy of note that satanic rulers recurrently hatch vicious plots so as to destroy active forces and keep alive inactive ones for exploitation.

It is not a source of wonder that such plots were hatched prior to Moses' (as) birth for the Children of

Israel who were slaves of the people of Pharaoh and it was regarded as an anti-revolutionary move following Moses' (as) uprising so as to severely suppress the forces of the Children of Israel forever.

At the close of the blessed Verse in question it reads:

"but** [**they knew not that**] **the plots of disbelievers are nothing but in vain."

Their stratagems are like arrows shot in the shadows of ignorance and error hitting rocks, since they are not convinced that they will pay for the consequences of their vicious acts. It is Divine Will that the forces of Truth vanquish those of falsehood.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 26

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَى وَلْيَدْعُ رَبَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ

26. Pharaoh said: "Leave me to slay Moses and let him call his Lord** [**so that He may save him**]**. I fear that he may change your religion or that he may cause mischief to appear in the land."

It is the common practice of tyrannical rulers to slay the leaders of the Path of Truth and it is the policy of the arrogant to deny, menace, and humiliate.

The struggle between Moses (as) and his adherents on the one side and Pharaoh and his followers on the other heightened and in order to impede the revolutionary move of Moses (as), Pharaoh made up his mind to slay him but it sounds as if his people and advisors declined.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"Leave me to slay Moses and let him call his Lord** [**so that He may save him**]**."

The Verse reveals that the majority of his advisors or at least some of them were against slaying Moses (as) and produced arguments to the effect that taking his miraculous acts he might cast a curse and his God might send down some torment.

Yet, the arrogant Pharaoh said:

"I will slay him! Come what may!"

However, the real motive of the adherents and advisors behind such impediment is not precisely known.

There are different possibilities all of which may be true: firstly, fear of Divine torment, secondly, fear of slaying Moses (as) and making a hero and martyr out of him thereby casting him in a halo of sanctity.

Thus, it could increase the number of believers and adherents particularly when it happened following

Moses (as) demonstrating his feats against sorcerers and his wonderful victory over them.

It is apparently so since Moses had demonstrated the twain great miracles of his, namely the walking stick and the illuminating hand, in his first meeting with Pharaoh as a consequence of which he had obtained the appellation of sorcerer.

He had asked for Moses' confrontation with his sorcerers and had set his hope on their sorcery as a consequence of which he awaited the due date of confrontation.

Taking the above points into consideration, there would remain no reason for Pharaoh's decision as to slaying Moses (as) at this time span nor would he stand in awe as to mass conversion into Moses' (as) religion.

In short, Pharaoh and his people maintained that Moses is a "menace" but slaying him would turn him into an "uprising" which would lead to an uncontrollable effervescent and massive movement.

There were a number of Pharaoh's people who were displeased with him. They wanted Moses (as) alive so that Pharaoh might be preoccupied with him and leave them in peace to take advantage of the preoccupation and be engaged in their misappropriations.

It is the usually practice that sovereigns' retinues desire the crown's preoccupation with certain affairs so that they could fill up their own coffers and at times provoked foreign enemies so as to stay secure from the crown's peace of mind.

To justify his decision as to slaying Moses (as), Pharaoh produces two arguments, a religious and spiritual argument and a material and worldly one, saying:

"I fear that he may change your religion or that he may cause mischief to appear in the land."

He says:

"If I keep silence, the religion of Moses (as) will immediately profoundly penetrate the hearts of the people of Egypt, as a consequence of which the sacred religion of idolatry protecting your identity and interests will be substituted with a monotheistic religion against you!

If I stay silent today and take measures against Moses (as) after a while, he will gather many an adherent and bloody conflicts will follow which will lead to bloodshed, corruption, and unrest throughout the land. Thus, it sounds expedient that I slay him at the earliest convenience."

It is noteworthy that from Pharaoh's point of view, religion was nothing more than being worshipped or idolatry which aimed at fooling the masses and poisoning their minds and a means of sanctification of their tyrannical and blood thirsty rule.

By corruption, he intended the creation of anti-arrogance revolution aiming to liberate the masses in

bondage and eradication of the traces of idolatry and revival of monotheism. To justify their crimes and to struggle against the men of God the corrupt and tyrants have made efforts at all times to make use of unfounded pretexts the instances of which may be seen in our time.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 27

وَقَالَ مُوسَى إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ

27. Moses said: "Indeed I seek refuge in my Lord and Your Lord from [the evil of] every arrogant who believes not in the Day of Reckoning."

We are supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty against the menaces of enemies since all our affairs are within His Sway and We are all subject to His Lordship.

Moses (as) said:

"I seek refuge in my Lord and Your Lord from [the evil of] every arrogant who believes not in the Day of Reckoning."

Moses (as) uttered such words with decisiveness and assurance springing from his firm faith and reliance on his Lord and demonstrated that he entertained nor fear of such menace.

The words of Moses (as) explicitly reveal that people with arrogance and lack of faith in the Day of Resurrection put others in jeopardy and one is supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty against such people.

Arrogance leads man to bias as a consequence of which he may not perceive nothing but his own self and thought, regard Divine Signs and Miracles as sorcery, and consider benevolent reformers to be corrupt and the admonitions of friends and adherents conservative and weak in character.

Faithlessness in the Day of Reckoning leads man to a frame of mind into which no specific plan may find its way.

Such a person may rise against Divine Omnipotence and resort to his limited power and fight His Messengers, since there is neither reckoning nor measure in his affairs. Now let us see to what Pharaoh's threats led. The following Verses unravels the issue and sheds light on the manner of Moses' (as) rescue from the tyrannical rule of that arrogant and vain Pharaoh.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 28

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلاً أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَإِنْ يَكُ

كَاذِباً فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقاً يُصِبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ

28. And a believing man of Pharaoh family who concealed his faith said: "Would you slay a man because he says: 'My Lord is Allah and he has come to you with clear signs from your Lord? And if he is a liar, upon him will be [the sin of] his lie; but if he is telling the truth, then some of that [misfortune] wherewith he threatens you will befall on you.'" Indeed Allah guides not one who is a transgressor [of limits] a liar!

One of the manifestations of Divine Succor springing from seeking refuge in Him is appearance of adherents among opponents. Bounties of forbidding evil extend to such degree that a Messenger may be saved from being slain and he may save a society from perdition.

This Verse treats of another episode in the history of Moses (as) and Pharaoh which is solely attested in this Chapter. It is the story of the believer of Pharaoh's family, one of his kith and kin who acknowledged Moses' (as) Call to monotheism.

However, he did not reveal his faith since he considered it incumbent upon himself to render Moses (as) well measured support. When he observed that Pharaoh was severely wrathful and he could jeopardize the life of the Messenger, he valiantly stepped forward and nullified the conspiracy aiming at taking his life.

The blessed Verse reads:

"A believing man of Pharaoh family who concealed his faith said: 'Would you slay a man because he says: 'My Lord is Allah and he has come to you with clear signs from your Lord?'"

Can you deny his miracles like those of his walking stick and his illuminating hand? Did you not see him who defeated sorcerers such that they surrendered to him? Did you not see that they were not moved by our threats and spared their lives for the sake of their faith in Moses' (as) Lord? Can such person be called a sorcerer?

Think twice before resorting to any hasty measure. Think about the consequences of your acts otherwise you will regret your negligence.

Furthermore, there are two alternatives:

"If he is a liar, upon him will be [the sin of] his lie; but if he is telling the truth, then some of that [misfortune] wherewith he threatens you will befall on you."

In other words he is saying that if Moses (as) happens to be a liar, he will be disgraced and will be recompensed for his lies, but it is also possible that he is an honest man appointed by Allah to impart Divine Promises and Warnings; consequently, it would be unwise to slay him.

Then he adds:

"Allah guides not one who is a transgressor [***of limits***] ***a liar!"***

If a believer proceeds toward transgression of bounds and telling lies, he will certainly lose Divine Guidance and if you happen to act likewise, he will be deprived of His Guidance.

It is worthy of note that the words of the believing man of Pharaoh family aimed at impressing Pharaoh and his people from different angles: firstly, Moses (as) does not deserve such severe reaction; secondly, one should not forget that he produces his own arguments which sound justified and confrontation with such a man will entail perils; thirdly, there is no need for your measures, since if he happens to be a liar, he will be chastised by God Almighty, but there exists the possibility that he is right and we will be chastised by his Lord!

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 29

يَا قَوْمِ لَكُمُ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَاهِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنَا مِنْ بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَنَا قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَى وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ

29. "O my people! Yours is the sovereignty today, you are dominant in the land. But who will save us from the torment of Allah, should it befall us?" Pharaoh said: "I show you only that which I see and I guide you only to the path of guidance!"

Believers are compassionate to people and prefer to struggle and make his presence even in disbelievers' rule rather than keep aloof and live in solitude. The believing man of the family of Pharaoh was not satisfied with uttering such words.

Addressing them benevolently in a friendly manner, he said:

"O my people! Yours is the sovereignty today, you are dominant in the vast land of Egypt. You are dominant and triumphant. Do not squander such abundant bounties. Who is going to render us succor if Divine torment befall us?"

It is possible that he intended to say unto them:

"Today you have absolute power and you may pass any judgment as to Moses' (*as*) *fate, but do not be deceived by the power nor forget the contingent consequences of your acts."*

His words apparently impressed Pharaoh's people and led to abatement of their wrath against Moses (as). However, Pharaoh did not keep silent and said abruptly:

"The die is cast and I believe in the veracity of my decree. Moses (*as*) *should lose his life and there*

remains no other alternative. Know that:

'I guide you only to the path of guidance!'"

That is the case with all tyrants and wrong doers in the past and present that they always imagine that their decisions are right and allow no one to comment on their acts. They consider themselves to be the masterminds and others are devoid of knowledge and intellect! This is mere ignorance and inanity.

Let us say a few words concerning the believing man of the family of Pharaoh. Qur'anic Verses solely reveal that he was a man of Pharaoh's people who had believed in Moses (as) but he concealed his faith and loved Moses (as) at heart.

He regarded it incumbent upon himself to defend him. He was intelligent, meticulous, tactful, and very sensible who helped Moses (as) at a critical point and saved him from a perilous conspiracy aiming at his murder. Islamic traditions and the words of Qur'anic exegets yield further details regarding him among which mentioned is made of his relation to Pharaoh.

It is noteworthy that one of the points treated in the blessed Verse is discretionary concealment of one's beliefs (taqiyya).

It is not equal to weakness, fear, and conservativeness, au contraire, it is the concealment of one's believes employed as an effective means against the arrogant tyrants through which the secrets of enemies may be exposed.

Concealment of beliefs, plans, and stratagems of struggles against enemies may inflict severe blows on them. The believing man of the family of Pharaoh employed the same means so as to render service to the religion of Moses (as) and save his life at a critical point.

What is better than having a believing supporter to defend one at the enemy's administration through whom one may penetrate into the depth of enemy's seat of power and obtain intelligence regarding everything, inform one's supporters, impress tyrants' minds, and alter their plans and stratagems?

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Discretionary concealment of beliefs is my religion and that of my forefathers. One who lacks it does not believe in religion. It is Divine Shield on the earth, since had the believing man of the family of Pharaoh revealed is faith, he would have lost his life."[1]

It may be particularly employed when believers constitute a minority under the rule of a merciless and insensible majority. Thus, it may impede ungrounded sparing of active forces rather it may concentrate and mobilize them for final uprising.

The Noble Prophet of Islam (as) concealed his Call in the first years of his Prophethood and make use of

the same method; however, following an increase in the number of his adherents and followers and the solidification of the original nucleus, he declared his Call in public.

It would be of interest to note the following Prophetic tradition:

"The first individuals who believed in the Call [*of the exalted Prophet*]*: Habib the carpenter, the believer among the people of Yasin, the one who asked the people* [*of Antioch*] *to follow the Messengers of God who are guided themselves and ask you for no remuneration; Ezekiel* (*Hizqiyal*)*, the believer of the family of Pharaoh; and 'Ali ibn Abi Talib* (as) *who is superior to all in rank."*[2]

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 30 - 31

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ

مِثْلَ دَأْبِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْماً لِلْعِبَادِ

30. And he who believed said: "O my people! Indeed I fear for you a fate like that day [***of destruction***] ***of the*** [***former***] ***Confederates!***
31. Like the fate of the people of Noah and 'Ad, and Thamud [***inflicted with tempest, poisonous icy gale, and lightning, respectively***] ***and those who came after them. And Allah wills no injustice for*** [***his***] ***servants.***

Do not desist promulgation of faith and Divine Guidance for the sake of opponents' words. Solitude does not lie in commanding good and forbidding evil.

Egyptians at the time were relatively civilized and literate and knew about historians' accounts of ancient peoples, like those of Noah, 'Ad, and Thamud whose lands did not lie too remote from theirs and they were more or less aware of their dire fates.

The blessed Verses in question indicate that the believing man of the family of Pharaoh, after raising objection as to the conspiracy against Moses' (as) life faced Pharaoh's severe resistance who confirmed his command as to taking the life of Moses (as); however, he did not desist from making efforts as he deemed it fit and appropriate to do so and thought of reminding the rebellious people of the history of ancient peoples and warn them against being inflicted with the same afflictions so that they may wake up and revise their decision.

Thus he opened his admonition:

"O my people! Indeed I fear for you a fate like that day [***of destruction***] ***of the*** [***former***] ***Confederates!"***

Then he added:

"Like the fate of the people of Noah and 'Ad, and Thamud** [**inflicted with tempest, poisonous icy gale, and lightning, respectively**] **and those who came after them. And Allah wills no injustice for** [**his**] **servants."

He made efforts to convince them, saying:

"these people were entangled with polytheism, disbelief, and rebellion and we are apprised of their dire fates. Some of them met their end by a devastating tempest, some by a horrible gale, some by lightning, and some by annihilating earthquakes!

Do you not think that you may be afflicted by such terrible disasters as a recompense of your persistence in disbelief and rebellion? Therefore, allow me to say unto you that I am afraid of such dire fate in store for you.

Could you produce some argument substantiating that you are different from them and you will not be afflicted with such Divine torments? What had they done that they were entangled with such torments? They solely resisted the Calls of Prophets and at times murdered or denied them. You are supposed to know that whatever befalls on you will be the consequences of your evil acts since:

'Allah wills no injustice for** [**his**] **servants.'"

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 32 - 33

وَيَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ

يَوْمَ تُوَلُّونَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ هَادٍ

32. "And, O my people! Indeed I fear for you the Day when there will be mutual calling."
33. A Day when you will turn your backs and flee having no protection from Allah** [**' torment**]**. And whomsoever Allah sends astray** [**for his evil deeds and abandons him**]**, for him there is no guide.

In promulgation of faith we are not supposed to expect achievement of favorable consequences at imparting the first reminder, but reiteration is a part and parcel of the task. One should also attend to emotions and feelings in this vein. We are supposed to remind people of Divine Wrath in this world and on the Day of Resurrection.

According to Verse 32, the believing man of the family of Pharaoh said:

"O my people! Indeed I fear for you the Day when there will be mutual calling,"

when people call one another for help but they hear no answer. The word ***al-tanad***, originally al-tanadi whose final /i/ is omitted and the final /i/ indicates the ellipsis derives from n-d-' ("call").

Most of Qur'anic exegets maintain that:

"the Day of mutual calling"

is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection. Different exegets attend to very similar aspects of the appellation in question.

According to an exeget, mutual calling refers to calling the people of Paradise by the people of Hell as it is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And the dwellers of Hell call to the dwellers of Paradise: 'Pour on us some water or anything that Allah has provided you with.' They will say: 'Both Allah has forbidden to disbelievers'"[3].

They may as well call others seeking refuge in one another and the Callers of Resurrection call unto them:

"No doubt! The curse of Allah is on wrong doers"[4].

When a believer sees the record of his deeds, he cries excitedly:

"Here, this is the record of my deeds. Come hither. O people! Read it!"[5]

A disbeliever at that time will fearfully cry out:

"I wish that I had not been given the record of my deeds"[6].

It is worthy of note that a broader semantic range may be assumed for the Verse in question such that

"the Day of mutual calling"

may comprehend this world as well, since it merely indicates calling one another and those who are at the end of their tether call one another but their calling is of no avail.

We find so many instances of mutual calling when Divine torments are sent down, when societies come to dead ends for their own sins and faults, when crises and terrible incidents adversely affect everyone, they flee seeking some refuge but there is not one to be found; all cry out for succor!

Verse 33 provides an interpretation for the Day of mutual calling:

"A Day when you will turn your backs and flee having no protection from Allah [***' torment***]***."***

One whom God Almighty sends astray [for his evil deeds] may not find any guide. Such people lose the

Path of Guidance and sink in the dire of ignorance and error and will lose the Path of Paradise and Divine Bounties.

The aforesaid expression may allude to Pharaoh's words:

"I show you only that which I see and I guide you only to the path of guidance!"

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 34

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولاً كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُرْتَابٌ

34. And verily Joseph did come to you in times gone by with clear signs, but you ceased not to doubt in what he did bring to you: till when he died you said: "No Messenger will Allah send after him." Thus, Allah leaves astray him who is a transgressor [***of limits***] ***and one who doubts*** [***Allah's Warning and His Oneness***].

The conducts of the good affects the obduracy of their generation. The believing man of the family of Pharaoh said:

"If you do not believe in Moses (***as***) ***today, it is no wonder, since you did not believe in Joseph*** (***as***) ***either."***

In this blessed Verse, he further proceeds with his admonition.

A brief survey of the preceding Verses and the One in question reveals that to impress the impenetrable heart of Pharaoh and his people, the believing man from his family made efforts to cleanse their arrogance and disbelief by presenting his words in five forms and stages.

Firstly, he opened his remarks with precaution calling that rebellious and disbelieving people to abstain from contingent loss saying that if Moses (as) were lying, he would carry the burden of his sins but if he tells the truth, we will be afflicted with Divine torment, so behave cautiously and be afraid of the dire consequences of your deeds.

Secondly, he asked them to glance at the accounts of ancient peoples and warned them against entanglement with such dire fate.

Thirdly, mention is made of an account of other peoples who were not too remote from them and they were still aware of their history since the nexus between them and those people were still intact. He raises the question of Joseph's (as) Prophethood who was Moses' (as) forefather. He also mentions Joseph's (as) people confronting with his Call.

“And verily Joseph did come to you in times gone by with clear signs, but you ceased not to doubt in what he did bring to you.”

They declined his Call for the sake of their arrogance, obduracy, and incessant suspicion rather than because of intricacies in his Call.

To dispose themselves of any obligation and in order to persist in their arrogance and following their concupiscence, they said upon Joseph’s (as) demise that God would never appoint another Messenger.

On the one side, they transgressed Divine bounds and on the other they entertained doubts as to everything; as a consequence of which God deprived them of His Bounties and left them in the mire of error and they could never expect any fate better than that.

The believing man of the family of Pharaoh further added:

“If you show the same reaction against Moses’ (as) *Call without any reflection or investigation, he may be a divinely appointed Messenger but you may deprive your sealed hearts of Divine Guidance.”*

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 35

الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ كَبُرَ مَقْتاً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ

35. Those who dispute about the Ayat (***Verses, Signs***) ***of Allah, without any authority that has come to them, it would lead to a fearsome Wrath to those who believe. Thus does Allah seal up the heart of every arrogant, tyrant.***

The word ***sultan*** indicates “authority, argument” and ***maqt*** designates “severe wrath.”

The blessed Verse in question provides further exposition for those according to which God Almighty seals hearts. It is herein said that God Almighty seals up the heart of arrogant tyrants.

Treating of

musrif-un murtab-un (“transgressor, doubter”) the Verse explains that they are those who

“dispute about the Ayat of Allah without any authority that has come to them.”

In other words, they take a stance against Divine Signs and Verses without producing an intellectual or narrational argument to substantiate their groundless disputations which spring from baseless assumptions, temptations, and pretexts.

Such baseless disputations against the Truth lead to Divine Wrath and detestation of believers, since

groundless disputations and taking insensible stances against Divine Signs and Verses lead to the error of disputants and others; it extinguishes the light of truth and reinforces the pillars of the rule of falsehood.

Their failure to submit to Truth is mentioned at the close of the Verse, saying that thus God Almighty seals the hearts of the wrong doing arrogant to the extent that their hearts are sealed up that neither their foul contents may exude nor may the right and invigorating contents be absorbed by them.

God deprives the arrogant tyrants who rise against the Truth failing to acknowledge truths of the spirit of truth seeking such that truth tastes bitter and falsehood tastes sweet to them.

The words of the believing man of the family of Pharaoh were quite effective and Pharaoh changed his mind as to slaying Moses (as) or at least postponed the execution of his decision, such that Moses (as) was saved from the perils and it was the great mission fulfilled by that intelligent and valiant man at that critical point and as will be mentioned below, he lost his life for it.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 36 - 37

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا هَامَانُ ابْنِ لِي صَرْحاً لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ الْأَسْبَابَ

أَسْبَابَ السَّمَاوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعَ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى وَإِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَاذِباً وَكَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَصُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ

36. And Pharaoh said: "O Haman! Build a tower for me so that I may arrive at the ways,
37. "The ways of [ascending] the heavens and I may look upon the God of Moses: Indeed, I regard him a liar." Thus it was made fair, in Pharaoh's eyes, the evil of his deeds and he was impeded from [treading] the [Straight] Path; and the plot of Pharaoh led to nothing but loss and perdition.

The word ***sarh*** designates "lofty edifice" visible from afar and tasrih indicates "declaration, clear statement." The word ***tabab*** is used in the sense of "continuity in incurring loss." Materialists regard everything in terms of materiality.

Pharaoh imagined that God was in the heavens and the way to knowing Him was only through the senses, like vision:

("and I may look upon the God of Moses").

Though Pharaoh was impressed by the words of the believing man of his family to avoid slaying Moses (as), but he was still vain and arrogant and he failed to make him submit to Truth, since the arrogant

man did not deserve such submission; as a consequence of which he proceeded with his mischievous measures and ordered that a lofty tower be built for ascending to the heavens and finding intelligence concerning Moses' (as) God, as it is reflected in the blessed Verse,

"Pharaoh said: 'O Haman! Build a tower for me so that I may arrive at the ways."

Was Pharaoh so ignorant that he thought Moses' (as) God was in the heavens and he could ascend to the heavens through the construction of a lofty edifice whose height was nothing compared to the mountains?

He apparently took such measure to achieve a number of goals. Firstly, he intended to preoccupy people with something other than Moses' (as) Prophethood and the uprising of the Children of Israel.

Construction of such lofty edifice which according to a number of Qur'anic exegets was supposed to employ fifty thousand architects, masons, and construction workers on a vast site could overshadow other issues and the loftier the tower, the more attention it could attract.

Then people would talk about it and defeating sorcerers by Moses (as) could temporarily slip into oblivion. Secondly, he aspired to bear financial assistance to laborers and provide them with at least a temporary employment for the unemployed so that they may consign to oblivion his wrong doings and people become more economically dependent on his treasury.

Thirdly, following the completion of construction, he planned to ascend it and take a glance at the sky, probably shoot an arrow, return to people and deceive them by saying that Moses' (as) claims were baseless, proceed with your affairs and rest assured! It is worthy of note that he knew that his lofty edifice could not be taller than mountains and there would be no difference in looking at the sky from the top of the edifice or mountains or from the plains.

It is also noteworthy that through ordering the construction of such lofty edifice, he took a step backwards by saying that he intended to investigate about God of Moses (as).

By saying:

"Indeed I regard him a liar!"

he descended from certitude to doubt.

The sentence

"Thus it was made fair, in Pharaoh's eyes, the evil of his deeds and he was impeded from [treading] the [Straight] Path; and the plot of Pharaoh led to nothing but loss and perdition"

reveals that the main reason lying behind Pharaoh's error was the embellishment of his evil deeds in his eyes which stemmed from his arrogance and vanity. The consequence of his vanity and arrogance was

that he went astray from the Path of Truth.

In the third stage, the total defeat of his plans is declared. Three brief but terse clauses suffice to express the truth. Certainly, such political stratagems may impress people in the short run; however, in the long run, total defeat is the consequence of such stratagems.

According to a number of traditions, Haman continued the construction of Pharaoh's tower such that strong winds impeded the process.

He came to Pharaoh and said unto him:

"We cannot construct it loftier than this."

A strong wind blew before long and the edifice collapsed.7

Surah al-Ghafir – Verses 38 – 39

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُونِ أَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ

يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ

38. And the man [***from the family of Pharaoh***] ***who believed said: "O my people! Follow me, I will guide you to the Path of Guidance.***
39. "O my people! Indeed this life of the world is nothing but an [***insignificant***] ***merchandise, and verily the Hereafter is the permanent abode."***

One is supposed at times to disregard discretionary concealment of one's beliefs and express them and call people to tread the Straight Path single handedly.

And the man [from the family of Pharaoh] who believed said:

"O my people! Follow me; I will guide you to the Path of Guidance".

It was mentioned in the preceding Verses that Pharaoh said:

"What I say leads to the Path of Guidance."

However, the believing man from the family of Pharaoh refuted his words and convinced people not to be deceived by his temptations since his plans would result in defeat and misfortune. He suggests them to follow the Path of fearing and worshipping God Almighty.

Verse 39 reads:

“O my people! Indeed this life of the world is nothing but [insignificant] merchandise, and verily the Hereafter is the permanent abode.”

Put the case that we become victorious, turning away from the Truth, and resorting to wrong doing and bloodshed. How long will we stay in this transient world? Death takes all into its sickle and sends everyone from lofty palaces to dust. Our everlasting abode is somewhere else.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 40

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

40. “Whosoever does an evil deed will not be requited except the like thereof and whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female, and is a true believer, will enter Paradise, where they will be provided therein without limit.

Faith and deeds are jointly effective and one of them may not lead to deliverance.

The question is not merely the transience of this world and the everlastingness of the world to come, but the significant question is reckoning deeds, since:

“Whosoever does an evil deed will not be requited except the like thereof but whosoever does a righteous deed, whether male or female and is a true believer, will enter Paradise and will be provided therein without limit.”

Secondly, in his well measured words, he refers to Divine Justice on the one hand through which sinners will be recompensed the like of their sins and on the other hand, he makes a reference to Boundless Divine Bounties to be bestowed upon believers without limit.

Such Bounties are without human imagination. Thirdly, the requisite of the accompaniment of faith and righteous deed is mention. Fourthly, mention is made of the equality of females and males before God Almighty and human values.

It is noteworthy that he tersely expresses the fact that despite the insignificance and transience of the merchandise of this world, it may lead to gaining boundless rewards. Is there any transaction more profitable than this?

The phrase:

“the like thereof” (***mithlaha***)

indicates that the recompenses in the Hereafter closely resemble the deeds committed in this world.

The phrase:

“without limits”

may demonstrate that reckoning the Bounties if for those who enjoy a few of them and fear that failing to keep a record of the same would entail shortage, but the Lord requires no reckoning since His Bounties are limitless and bestowing bounties may not decrease them.

A question is raised here as to the consistency of the Verse in question with:

“Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten times the like thereof to his credit”[8].

In providing a reply to the question, it is worthy of note to keep in mind that

“ten times”

is the least Divine Reward and in case of expending in the Cause of Allah, it will be increased to seven hundred times and more and finally it will be increased to limitless reckoning whose extend is solely known by God Almighty.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 41 - 42

وَيَا قَوْمِ مَا لِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجَاةِ وَتَدْعُونَنِي إِلَى النَّارِ

تَدْعُونَنِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأُشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ

41. [***The believing man of the family of Pharaoh said:***] ***“And O my people! How is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to Hellfire!***
42. “You invite me to disbelieve in Allah and to associate partners in worship with Him of which I have no knowledge [***whereas***] ***I invite you to the Omnipotent, the Oft-Forgiving!***

Repentance and turning away from polytheism and disbelief will be accepted by God Almighty; however such acceptance is not owing to inability and desperateness, but it signifies that God Almighty, the Omnipotence, is Oft-Forgiving.

In the fifth and the last stage, the believing man of the family of Pharaoh tore all veils asunder. He could not conceal his faith any longer and expressed what was due frankly and as it will be mentioned below, they made a perilous decision about him.

The contextual meaning of the Verses demonstrates that those vain and obdurate people were not silent before that faithful and valiant man but talked of polytheism and called him to embrace idolatry.

In reply, he cried:

"And O my people! How is it that I call you to salvation while you call me to Hellfire?"

In Verse 42, he said:

"You invite me to disbelieve in Allah and to associate partners in worship with Him of which I have no knowledge [***whereas***] ***I invite you to the Omnipotent, the Oft-Forgiving!"***

Different Qur'anic Verses and the history of Egypt reveal that besides worshipping Pharaohs, they also worshipped many an idol, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said: 'Will you leave Moses and his people to spread mischief in the land and to abandon you and your gods?' He said: 'We will slay their sons and let live their women and we have indeed irresistible power over them"9.

Joseph (as) imprisoned at Pharaoh's prison said unto his inmates:

"Are many different lords better or Allah, the One, the Irresistible?"10

In a crystal clear juxtaposition, the believing man of the family of Pharaoh reminded them that they call him to polytheism which is groundless and a dark and perilous path whereas he calls them to tread a manifest path, that of God Almighty, the Omnipotent, the Oft-Forgiving.

The Divine Most Beautiful Names, the Omnipotent and Oft-Forgiving make a reference to the Great Origin of fear and hope on the one hand and allude to the negation of the divinity of idols and Pharaohs lacking potency and forgiveness on the other.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 43

لا جَرَمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونَنِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنَّ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ

43. "No doubt you call me to [***worship***] ***one who cannot grant*** [***me***] ***my request in this world nor in the Hereafter. And our return will be to Allah and the transgressors*** [***of limits***] ***shall be the dwellers of the Fire!"***

Faith and decisiveness play significant roles in doctrinal issues. We are supposed to substantiate our arguments with convincing reasons in matters concerning commanding good and forbidding evil. Idols may not call people nor do they grant their requests.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that what they call him to may not grant his requests in this world and the Hereafter. In other words, these idols have never sent messengers to people to call

people to them nor will they have any power in the Hereafter.

These insentient things may never engender anything. They do not talk; they have neither messengers nor any tribunal.

In short, they may not solve problems nor are they able to make them. Thus, we should know that we shall return to God Almighty on the Resurrection Day. He is the One Who sent His Messengers for man's guidance and He is the One Who shall chastise and reward His servants for their good and evil deeds.

We are also supposed to bear in mind that:

"transgressors** [**of limits**] **shall be the dwellers of the Fire!"

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 44

فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأُفَوِّضُ أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

44. "And** [**before long**] **you will remember what I am telling you and my affair I leave it to Allah since He is the All-Seer of** [**His**] **servants."

The Arabic word ***tafwid*** ad hoc indicates "leaving affairs to Allah" which is higher in rank than tawakkul "reliance in God" since in the former the client may supervise the task of the agent but in the former all the affairs are unquestionably vested with the agent.[11]

It is worthy of attention that leaving all affairs to God as the slogan of the believing man of the family of Pharaoh followed all his efforts toward saving Moses (as) from execution, promulgation of faith, warning Pharaoh's people against Divine Wrath, and waking others from neglect.

Such leaving affairs to God Almighty leads to Divine Support:

(***"Therefore Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted** [**against him**]"*).

Thus, the believing man of the family of Pharaoh finally revealed his faith and drew a distinction between his monotheism and their polytheism and singlehandedly resisted them and refuted their polytheistic beliefs.

Finally, he provided them with a meaningful warning to the effect that they would remember what he said them and that would be when Divine wrath would afflict you with torments in this world and the Hereafter. It is unfortunate that it will be too late since all the gates to repentance will be shut in this world and there will be no return to this world in the Hereafter.

He further added:

“my affair I leave it to Allah since He is the All-Seer of* [*His*] *servants.”

That was why he entertained no fear of their threats, large number, power, and being singlehanded since he had left all his affairs to God Almighty, the Omnipotent, the All-Seer of His servants’ states.

It is noteworthy that his last words were his humble devotions to God Almighty when he was entangled by a powerful and merciless people invoking God Almighty to protect him in such dire circumstances.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 45

فَوَقَاهُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ

45. Therefore Allah saved him from the evils that they plotted* [*against him*]*, while an evil torment encompassed Pharaoh’s people.

It is through Divine Grace that the life and faith of believers are saved from conspiracies and conspirators and plotters are destroyed. The blessed Verse in question says that God Almighty did not leave this believing and struggling servant alone but protected him from their vicious plots.

The expression:

“the evils that they plotted”

reveals that they probably hatched plots against him. What were these plots? The nature of these plots is not explicitly mentioned herein; however, they were naturally different punishments, torments, and finally execution.

The important point is that Divine Grace rendered all those plots ineffective. A number of Qur’anic exegets maintain that the believing man took an opportunity to reach Moses and the Children of Israel and crossed the Nile with them.

It is also said that when the decision was made as to his execution, he escaped to a mountain and no one could see him anymore.[12] The twain interpretations are not inconsistent. It is probable that he hid somewhere without the city to join the Children of Israel later on and cross the Nile with them.

Some of the plots in question were probably the imposition of idolatry and convincing him to abandon monotheism but God Almighty saved him from these plots as well and made him to proceed more firmly on the Path of faith, monotheism, and fearing God Almighty.

Au contraire, severe torments were sent down on the people of Pharaoh.

Divine chastisements and torments are all excruciating but the expression:

"an evil torment"

reflects that God Almighty condemned them to a more excruciating torment which is mentioned in the following Verse.

1. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 8, p. 521, under the Verses in question.
2. Saduq, Amali; Ibn Hajar, Sawa'iq, Chapter 2, Section 9.
3. 7:50
4. 11:18
5. 69:19
6. 69:25
7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 13, p. 125, apud 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir.
8. 6:160
9. 7:127
10. 12:39
11. Tafsir Nimuna.
12. Majma' al-Bayan, under the Verse in question.

Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 46 - 63

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 46

النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوّاً وَعَشِيّاً وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ

46. The Fire, they are exposed to it, morning and evening. And on the Day when the Hour will be established [***it will be said***]

Between death and Resurrection lies a period in which sinners find out that their abode is Hellfire. Thus the blessed Verse says that their excruciating torment is the fire in which they suffer every morning and evening.

Pharaoh's people are ordered to taste the most excruciating torment. It is worthy of note that mention is made of Pharaoh's family, companions, and adherents who were all astray. When they become entangled with such dire fate, Pharaoh will have a far worst fate in store for him.

Secondly, the Verse says that they will taste Hellfire every morning and evening, but they will taste the worst excruciating torment on the Day of Resurrection which explicitly indicates that the former torment will be that of purgatory to be inflicted after this world and prior to the Day of Resurrection and will entail

tasting Hellfire.

Such torment will make soul shiver with terror and will also affect the body.

Thirdly, the phrase:

"morning and evening" (***ghadw wa 'ashi***)

may either refer to the progression of the torment, as it is said he is our pest morning and evening, i.e. at all times, or it makes reference to the discontinuity of the purgatorial torment, i.e., torments will be inflicted upon them in the morning and in the evening when they were engaged in merry making and boasting their power.

The expression:

"morning and evening"

should not be a source of wonder as to the existence of times of the day in purgatory, since Qur'anic Verses reveal that there will be morning and evening even in the Hereafter as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And they will have therein their sustenance, morning and evening"[1].

It is not inconsistent with the permanence of the Bounties of Paradise, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"Its provision is eternal and so is its shade"[2]

since there exists the possibility that despite the permanence of provisions and sustenance, certain Bounties be bestowed upon the people of Paradise.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 47

وَإِذْ يَتَحَاجُّونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعاً فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُغْنُونَ عَنَّا نَصِيباً مِنَ النَّارِ

47. And when they will dispute [***and producing arguments***] ***in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were arrogant: "Indeed we followed you. Are you able to take from us some portion of the Hellfire?"***

The preceding Verses treated of Divine Wrath against Pharaoh's family. These Verse reflect the dialogs of the arrogant and Pharaohs down the centuries with their flattering companions and supporters in Hell.

Thus it is said in this Verse:

“When they will dispute [and producing arguments] in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were arrogant: “Indeed we followed you. Are you able to take from us some portion of the Hellfire?”

The weak say unto the arrogant that they were their followers but they wonder whether they could take some of the torments of Hellfire in lieu of them.

“The weak”

refers to those who were not intellectually independent and blindly followed the chiefs of disbelief referred to in the Holy Qur’an as the arrogant.

Their followers in Hell indubitably know that their chiefs like them are entangled with Divine torment in Hell and are not able in the least to protect them. A question is raised here as to the grounds lying behind their request from their former chiefs as to taking from them some portion of Hellfire.

A number of Qur’anic exegets maintain that it was their habit to seek refuge in them upon being afflicted with severe afflictions as a consequence of which they are unconsciously reacting likewise. However, it would be better to say that such request is a kind of derision and reproach toward them so that they know that all their claims were false and groundless.

It is worthy of note that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) in a sermon delivered on one of the days of Ghadir called people to monotheism and bade them to follow those whom God appointed as leaders.

Reminding people of the Verse in question, he asked:

“Do you know what arrogance is? It is failure to obey those whom you are supposed to follow. Arrogance is to regard yourselves superior to them. There are recurrent instances in which the Holy Qur’an treats of the same such that if man reflects upon it, the Holy Qur’an provides him with admonitions and impedes him from committing evil deeds.”

In fact, Imam ‘Ali (as) intended to warn that there was no excuse for those who consigned the Noble Prophet’s (S) testament on the Day of Ghadir and followed others.[3]

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 48 - 49

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْماً مِنَ الْعَذَابِ

48. Those who were arrogant will say* [*in reply*]*: "We are all in this* [*Fire*]*! Indeed Allah has judged between* [*His*] *servants* [*justly*]*!"
49. And those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell: "Call upon your Lord to alleviate for us the torment for a day!"

No one will be able to carry the burden of others on the Day of Resurrection. How one who is the Fire save others from torment?

According to the blessed Verses in question, the arrogant will say:

"We and you are in Hellfire and share the same fate and God judged between His servants with justice. Had we been able to render you help, we would have helped ourselves. We cannot do anything here.

We may neither ward off torment from you nor from us, nor are we able to take from you some of your torment. God never chastises anyone without any reason. Whoever has committed evil will be chastised accordingly.

Our burden of sins is heavier than yours since we were in error ourselves and sent you to error as well. Had we been able to do anything, we would have done something for ourselves. You have also committed sins for having followed us out of your free choice. You could believe in God as some you did and saved themselves from torment."

When all of them lose their hope, they seek refuge in the angels of torment.

Verse 49 is saying that when they become totally desperate, they turn to the keepers of Hell and angels of torment:

"and those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell: "Call upon your Lord to alleviate for us the torment for a day!"

They know that there is no escape from Divine chastisement, but they merely request that Divine torment be alleviated form them for one day so that they may be able to take a rest and are content with the same.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 50

قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَى قَالُوا فَادْعُوا وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

50. They* [*keepers of Hell*] *will say: "Did there not come to you, your Messengers with miracles?" They will say: "Yes." They will reply: "Then call* [*invoke God Almighty*]*! And the invocation of the disbelievers is nothing but in vain!"

Conversion to belief in God upon tasting Divine Wrath shall be of no avail, since repentance upon death shall be in vain. Upon drowning, Pharaoh repented his sins, but it was said unto him that now it will be of no use since you committed sins without repentance[4].

According to the blessed Verse in question, keepers of Hell will say:

"Now that you are entangled with Divine torment, you may invoke God Almighty as you wish; however, you are supposed to know that disbelievers' invocations will not be answered and they will be in vain.

You confess that Divinely appointed Messengers came unto you with clear proofs and miracles, but you ignored them and disbelieved. Therefore, your invocations will be fruitless since God Almighty will never answer disbelievers' prayers."

A number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that the last sentence indicates that keepers of Hell say unto disbelievers:

"You may invoke God yourselves, since we are not supposed to invoke God Almighty without His Permission."

The sentence demonstrates that when angels lack such permission, the gates to deliverance are all closed and disbelievers' invocations will not be answered.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 51 - 52

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ

يَوْمَ لا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

***51. Indeed We will truly make triumphant Our Messengers and those who believe in this mundane life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth* [*to bear witness*],**
52. The* [*same*] *Day when wrong doers' excuses will be of no use. Theirs will be the curse, and theirs will be the evil abode.

It is Divine practice to render support to Messengers and believers. It is a Divine Promise that Truth becomes victorious over falsehood. Verse 51 is saying:

***"Indeed We will truly make triumphant Our Messengers and those who believe in this mundane life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth* [*to bear witness*]."**

Such support is emphatically unconditional and boundless; as a consequence of which it entails different triumphs, including becoming victorious in arguments, battles, sending down Divine torment upon

opponents and causing their perdition, and also sending down invisible succors invigorating hearts and souls through Divine Favor.

In Verse 51 we come across a new expression concerning the Day of Resurrection – the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [to bear witness]. The word ***ashhad*** is the plural form of shahid ("witness").

Different interpretations have been produced as to the identity of such witnesses which are all consistent with each other:

1. Angels recording deeds,

2. Messengers bearing witness concerning their peoples,

3. Angels, Messengers, and believers who bear witness to deeds of mankind.

The expression is worthy of attention referring to the point that on that Day when all people shall gather together, witnesses shall rise to bear witness. Being disgraced on that Day is the worst as victory on that Day is the best. God shall support His Messengers and believers on that Day and shall make them more prestigious.

Nonetheless, that Day is the day of disgrace and misfortune for disbelievers and wrong doers as reflected in Verse 52:

"The [***same***] ***Day when wrong doers' excuses will be of no use. Theirs will be the curse, and theirs will be the evil abode."***

Firstly, their excuses before witnesses shall be of no avail and they shall be disgraced at that great tribunal; secondly, they shall be deprived of Divine Mercy and Divine curse shall befall on them; thirdly, they shall suffer physical chastisement and torment in the worst abode, in Hellfire.

It would be of interest to make mention of some Qur'anic Verses concerning Messengers and Divine Succor bestowed upon Messengers and believers in order to provide further exposition for :

"Indeed We will truly make triumphant Our Messengers and those who believe in this mundane life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [***to bear witness***]***."***
"If you help God, He will help you"[5].

Noah's (as) deliverance:

"We delivered him and those with him on the ship"[6].

Abraham's (as) deliverance:

"O Fire! Be cold and safe [***for Abraham***]***"***[7].

Lot’s (as) deliverance:

“When We saved him and his family all”[8].

Joseph’s (as) deliverance:

“Thus We established Joseph on the land”[9].

Shu’ayb’s (as) deliverance:

“We saved Shu’ayb and those who believed with him”[10].

Salih’s (as) deliverance:

“And thus We do deliver the believers”[11].

Hud’s (as) deliverance:

“We saved Hud and those who believed with him”[12].

Jonah’s (as) deliverance:

“And We saved him from sorrow”[13].

Jesus’ (as) deliverance:

“I will take you and raise you to Myself”[14].

The Noble Prophet of Islam’s (S) deliverance:

“Indeed We have given you a manifest victory”[15].

Believers’ deliverance:

“And Allah has already made you victorious at Badr when you were a weak little force”[16]***;***
“Then Allah did send down His reassurance on the Messenger (S) and on the believers”[17]***;***
“He it is Who sent down reassurance into the hearts of the believers that they may grow more in faith”[18]***;***

Answering the prayers of Noah, Jonah, Zachariah, and Job (as)[19];

Answering the invocations of righteous believers:

“And He answers the invocation of those who believe and do righteous good deeds”[20].

Divine Deliverance of Prophets and believers manifests itself in diverse forms as follows:

“To strengthen your hearts”[21]*;*
“Allah will keep firm those who believe with the word that stands firm in this world”[22]*.*
“Then his Lord answered his prayers”[23]*;*
“My Lord! Leave not one of the believers on the earth!”[24]*.*
“Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs”[25]*.*
“We had conferred given the family of Abraham a great kingdom”[26]*.*
“Truly Allah has given you victory on many battlefields”[27]*.*
“And Verily Allah sent down upon him His reassurance and helped him with invisible hosts”[28]*.*
“So We took retribution from them. We drowned them in the sea”[29]*.*
“Is it not enough for you that your Lord should help you with three thousand angels sent down?”[30]*.*
“And He cast terror into their hearts”[31]*.*
“He it is Who has sent His Messenger (S) with guidance and the religion of truth to make it victorious over all religions.[32]*”*
“The We saved him and those with him on the ship”[33]*.*
“Surely Allah weakens the deceitful plots of the disbelievers”[34]*.*

Therefore, man is in need of Divine deliverance at all times.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 53 - 54

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرائيلَ الْكِتَابَ

هُدىً وَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

53. And verily We gave Moses (as) the Guidance and We made the Children of Israel to inherit the Scripture [the Torah],
54. A guide and a reminder for men of understanding.

Guidance is a Divine Favor and all people, even the Prophets, are in need of it.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question say:

“We gave Moses (as) the Guidance and We made the Children of Israel to inherit the Scripture [the Torah].”

The Divine Guidance bestowed upon Moses (as) embraces a broad semantic range which includes Prophethood, Revelation, the Scripture (Torah), the Guidance granted to him in order to fulfill his mission, and the miracles granted to him.

The expression inheritance connoting the Torah indicates that Children of Israel could avail themselves of it down the generations non gratia like the property inherited without toil, though they misused this Divine inheritance.

Verse 54 further adds that this Scripture was Divine Guidance a reminder for men of understanding. The difference between guidance (hidaya) and reminder (dhikra) is that the former indicates the inception of something whereas the latter designates reminding what one has already heard and believed in it, but he has consigned it into oblivion. In other words, the Scripture is the origin and the means of progression of guidance.

However, men of understanding, rather than the blind biased and obdurate ignorant, reap the harvest in the beginning and thereafter. Intellection and fear of God are the prerequisites of understanding Divine teachings.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 55

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ

55. Therefore be patient. Indeed, the Promise of Allah is true, and ask forgiveness for your sin and glorify the praises of your Lord in the time period after the noon till sunset and in the time period from early morning or sunrise till evening.

In this blessed Verse, God Almighty gives three injunctions of significance to the Noble Prophet (S). Although they are addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but they are in fact given to all people.

The blessed Verse in question opens with the injunction:

"Be patient as the Promise of Allah is true."

He is asked to be tolerant against his enemies' obduracy, enmity, and sabotage and also against the ignorance, weakness, negligence, and the harms of a number of his friends. He is asked to be patient against unchecked passions and anger since the key to victory is patience against vicissitudes at all times.

God's Promise to make him and his followers victorious is true. Believing in the truth of Divine Promise encourages him and makes him to preserver against vicissitudes and difficulties.

He is many a time asked to be patient at all times, as it is reflected in the Verse in question and elsewhere, and at times, specific instances are mentioned, e.g.:

"So bear with patience all that they say and glorify the praises of your Lord before the rising of

the sun and before its setting. And during a part of the night glorify His praises and after the prayers”[35]***;***
“And keep yourself patiently with those [***your seemingly poor followers***] ***who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face and let not your eyes overlook them”***[36].

All the victories of the Prophet (S) and early Muslims were the fruits of patience and perseverance. Even today, one may not vanquish so many enemies and solve so many problems without the same.

The second injunction says:

“Ask forgiveness for your sin.”

Owing to his infallibility, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) did not commit sins, but as mentioned above, such Qur'anic expressions concerning the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and other Prophets (as) indicate relative sins, since at times, some of the deeds which are regarded as good deeds and acts of devotion for ordinary people are considered as sins for Prophets (as):

(***“The good deeds of the righteous are the sins of those close to God Almighty”***).

They are not supposed to avoid preferable acts for one single moment. Owing to their exalted station and understanding, they are supposed to stay away from such acts and they should ask forgiveness whenever they commit the same.

A number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that sins committed by Muslims are ad hoc intended or those sins committed against the Noble Prophet (S), and asking forgiveness is arbitrary and devotional; however, these interpretations are not seemingly possible.

The last injunction says:

“Glorify the praises of your Lord in the time period after the noon till sunset and in the time period from early morning or sunrise till evening.”

The Arabic word ***'ashi*** designates “afternoon till before sunset” and abkar is used in the sense of “early morning.”

They may indicate these two times when man is prepared to praise and glorify Allah, since he has not preoccupied himself with daily affairs or he has finished them.

The expression may demonstrate the continuity of praising and glorifying God Almighty throughout the day and night, as we say, for instance, take care of him morning and night,” by which we mean at all times.

Some have also maintained that such praises and glorification refers to morning and evening prayers or all daily prayers; however, the contextual content of the Verse encompasses a broader semantic range

and daily prayers may solely be regarded as their instances.

It is worthy of note that these three comprehensive injunctions aim at purification of the self for gaining victories through Divine Favor. They may be used as the provisions required for proceeding on the path toward attainment of significant goals.

It is incumbent upon man to endure the vicissitudes of life and its obstacles, purify his heart of sins and any other impurities, and embellish it with the remembrance of the Lord.

Such embellishment depends upon praising God Almighty for His Perfection and glorifying Him for His being far from any imperfection. Such praise and glorification of God Almighty sheds light onto His servants' hearts, absolves them of impurities, and adorns them with perfect attributes.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 56

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ إِنْ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

56. Indeed those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah without any authority having come to them, there is nothing else in their breasts except pride. They will never have it [nor shall they reap the fruits of their disputes]. Therefore, seek refuge in Allah. Indeed it is He Who is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

Disputation with the Truth springs from vanity rather than sensibility and the vain obdurate may not achieve their goal which is leadership.

Thus the blessed Verse says:

"Indeed those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah without any authority having come to them, there is nothing else in their breasts except pride."

As mentioned above, the word ***mujadala*** indicates "disputation and illogical discussions," though the same is also employed in the semantically broader sense of truth and falsehood.

The expression:

"any authority having come to them"

lays emphasis on the meaning of disputation since authority (sultan) designates the argument substantiating a claim which leads to one's superiority over the other party.

The phrase:

“having come to them”

alludes to the arguments revealed by God Almighty and the emphasis on Revelation is due to the fact that it is the most assuring way of substantiating the true claims.

Divine Ayat which were subject to disputation refers to the miracles and Verses of the Holy Qur’an and the relevant discussions regarding Origin and the Hereafter, at times referred to as sorcery, madness, stories of the ancients (asatir al-awwalin)!

Therefore, the blessed Verse bears witness to the fact that disputes Originate from vanity and arrogance, since the arrogant and the vain, owing to their keen interest in themselves are indifferent to others and regard their own thought and words true and those of others as false hence their persistence in the veracity of their baseless claims.

The Arabic particle:

inna (***“indeed”***)

indicates that the such claims originate from vanity and arrogance; otherwise, how may one insist on one’s claims without producing evidence and arguments?

The word:

“breasts” (***sudur***)

refers to hearts which in turn designates “soul, thought” recurrently attested in Qur’anic Verses.

Some Qur’anic exegets interpret the word:

kibr (***“arrogance, vanity”***)

in the aforesaid blessed Verse as hasad (“envy, jelousy”) and maintain that disputants envy the Noble Prophet’s (S) exalted spiritual and worldly station and rank; however, the word kibr does not denote hasad but it may connote it, since the vain and the arrogant are usually envious as well and wish all bounties for themselves and grieve when others enjoy them.

The blessed Verse further adds:

“They will never have it [***nor shall they reap the fruits of their disputes***]***.”***

They intend to satisfy their own vanity and arrogance and rule the society, but they shall not reap anything but degradation and debasement. They will neither achieve their vain goals nor will they be able to nullify the truth through their baseless disputes.

The blessed Verse closes with Divine Injunction to the Noble Prophet (S):

“Therefore, seek refuge in Allah. Indeed it is He Who is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.”

God Almighty hears their baseless disputes and sees their vicious deeds and conspiracies. The point is that not only the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) but also all believers treading the Path of Truth are supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty in the vicissitudes of life and against insensible disputants.

It is for the same reason that against the tempest of Zulaykha’s lust, Joseph (as) says:

“I seek refuge in Allah! Truly, he [your husband] is my master! He made my living in a great comfort! Indeed wrong doers will never be successful”[37].

Verse 27 of the Chapter in question reads:

“Moses (as) said: ‘Indeed I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant person who believes not in the Day of Reckoning!’”[38].

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 57

لَخَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

57. The creation of the heavens and the earth is indeed greater than the creation of mankind; yet, most of people know not.

If we take a glance at the grandeur of the creation of the world of existence, we will never find ourselves superior to others.

Since one of the most significant issues disputed by disbelievers against the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is Resurrection, the blessed Verse in question explicitly raises the issue saying:

“The creation of the heavens and the earth is indeed greater than the creation of mankind; yet, most of people know not.”

One Who is Able to create such celestial bodies and galaxies with such grandeur and set them in order will not be incapable of raising the dead. Some people are too ignorant to understand such truths.

Most of Qur’anic exegets maintain that the blessed Verse is a response to disbelievers’ disputes against Resurrection.[39]

Some also hold that the blessed Verse may be a response to the arrogant who consider their narrow minded though great; however, compared to the grandeur of the world of existence, they were not but an iota. The latter is not too remote from the contextual meaning of the Verses, but taking the following Verses into account, the former interpretation sounds more appropriate.

Thus, ignorance is mentioned in this blessed Verse as one of the reasons of false disputes. The issue of vanity and arrogance was already raised and the two, i.e., ignorance and vanity, are closely intertwined since vanity springs from ignorance toward one's limited extent of knowledge.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 58

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلا الْمُسِيءُ قَلِيلاً مَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

58. And not equal are the blind and those who see; nor are [***equal***] ***those who believe and do righteous good deeds and those who do evil. Little do you remember.***

Those who neglect understanding truths are like the blind. Some of the people do not know and some of those who know refuse to acknowledge the truths.

In an explicit comparison, the blessed Verse depicts the state of the ignorant arrogant against understanding believers, saying:

"And not equal are the blind and those who see; nor are [***equal***] ***those who believe and do righteous good deeds and those who do evil."***

The blind refers to the ignorant whose eyes are covered by the veils of vanity and arrogance thus hindered from perceiving the truth. Au contraire, the seers is a reference to those who perceive the Truth in the light of knowledge and logical arguments.

Are they equal? Now, are the believers who do righteous good deeds on a par with vicious and evil doers? The former comparison aims at knowledge and understanding and the latter makes a reference to the reflection of such knowledge in their deeds.

The point is that seers perceive their humbleness and the grandeur of the world of existence; as a consequence of which they are aware of their state and rank, but the blind solely perceive their spatial and temporal states rather than their surrounding world, that is why they make mistakes concerning their own existence at all times and are entangled by vanity and arrogance which lead them to doing evil deeds.

It is also possible to make use of the twain clauses of the blessed Verse to the effect that having faith and doing righteous good deeds make man see and disbelief and committing evil deeds render him blind such that the blind are impeded to draw a distinction between truth and falsehood.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 59

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَآتِيَةٌ لا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ

59. Indeed the Hour is surely coming, there is no doubt about it, yet most men believe not.

Doubts concerning the coming of Resurrection originate from disbelievers' ignorance of Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience.

The blessed Verse in question explicitly and decisively apprises people of the coming of Resurrection, saying:

"Indeed the Hour is surely coming, there is no doubt about it, yet most men believe not."
"Indeed" (***inna***)***,***
"surely" (***la- in la-atiyatun***)***,***

and

"there is no doubt about it" (***la rayba fi-ha***)

recurrently emphasize that the Day of Resurrection shall definitely arrive. Many arguments for the substantiation of the coming of Resurrection are to found in Qur'anic Verses and there are also attestations of the issue as a certainty without providing arguments.

According to Raghib's Mufradat, the word:

sa'a (***"hour"***)

is originally employed in the sense of a division of time and since the coming of Resurrection and Reckoning of deeds shall be carried out instantly, the word in question is used to convey the idea.

The expression is to be found in tens of Qur'anic Verses in the same sense; however, it is employed at times regarding the Resurrection per se at times concerning the end of the world and the beginning of Resurrection.

Since the twain are closely intertwined and they both occur unexpectedly, they are referred to as:

"the Hour."

The clause:

"yet most men believe not"

is not a reference to the ambiguity and concealment of Resurrection, but if designates that one of the significant reasons lying behind denial of Resurrection is inclination toward liberty in taking unconditional use of worldly possessions and concupiscence.

Furthermore, boundless and vain desires impede man from reflection on the coming of Resurrection and expressing his belief in the same.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 60

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

60. And your Lord said: "Invoke Me, I will respond to your [***invocation***]. ***Indeed those who scorn My worship, they will surely enter Hell in humiliation."***

God Almighty asks us to invoke Him despite the fact that He is All-Aware of our needs, but invoking Him entails consequences.

The preceding Verses included warnings against disbelievers and the vain; however, the blessed Verse in question, He promises the repentant to bestow His Bounties and Favors on them, saying:

"And your Lord said: 'Invoke Me, I will respond to your [***invocation***]***.'"***

Many an exeget maintain that invocation herein and also in numerous traditions cited in their exegeses under the blessed Verse in question as to invocation and its Divine Rewards refers to its literal sense.

Nevertheless, following Ibn 'Abbas, the exeget of repute, some other Qur'anic exegets hold that invocation attested herein may designate monotheism and worshipping God Almighty, i.e.

"Worship Me and believe in My Unity."

However, the former interpretation sounds more appropriate.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question makes mention of a number of points:

God Almighty wants believers to invoke Him in their devotions.

Answering prayers follows invocation, but we know that it is a conditional Promise, since solely prayers are answered that they have the required qualifications as to the invoker and the subject of invocation. The point was already raised and a detailed discussion on the same as well as on its philosophy and true meaning are to be found under 2:186.

Prayer is a form of worship since the word worship is applied to it in the blessed Verse in question.

Those refraining from invoking God Almighty are thus severely warned:

"Indeed those who scorn My worship, they will surely enter Hell in humiliation."

Numerous traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and Imams (as) clearly refer to the significance of invocation.

A number of the instances include:

According to a Prophetic tradition:

*"Invocation is worshipping God."*40

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), the Noble Imam is asked:

"What do you say about two persons who entered a mosque and one of them established more prayers and the other invoked God Almighty in more devotions. Which one enjoys a more exalted state?"

The Imam replied:

"Both did righteous good deeds."

He was again asked:

"I know that, but which one is superior to the other?"

The Noble Imam replied:

*"The one who invoked God in more devotions is higher in rank. Have you not heard that invocation is the greatest worship?"*41

It is reported that Imam Baqir (as) was asked on the excellence of invocation.

He replied:

*"There is nothing more excellent that invoking God Almighty in devotions and no one is more detested before God Almighty than one who is too arrogant to invoke him to bestow His blessings and bounties on him."*42

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that there are stations on the Path toward God Almighty whose attainment is solely possible though invocation. If one fails to invoke Him, nothing will be granted to him. Therefore, invoke God Almighty to grant you His Favors, since if you knock at any door and persevere, it will be finally opened to you."

According to some traditions, invocation is even considered to entail more excellence than recitation of

the Holy Qur'an, since it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S), Imam Baqir (as), and Imam Sadiq (as) that invocation is more excellent than the recitation of the Holy Qur'an.[43]

A brief analysis may lead to the profound contextual meaning of these traditions, since invocation of God Almighty in devotions leads man to knowing God Almighty that is the best possession for him on the one hand and makes him perceive that he is in need of Him and he should be humble before Him, cast away vanity and arrogance resulting in misfortunes and disputes concerning the Signs and Verses of God Almighty on the other.

Thus, man feels inferior before His Pure Essence. It is through invoking God that man perceives that Bounties are bestowed by God Almighty; as a consequence of which he loves Him thus strengthens his spiritual nexus with His Presence.

It is in this vein that man perceives that he is in need of Divine Favors and feels the obligation to submit to Him and obey His Command.

Besides, when man understands that answering prayers is not unconditional, but it depends on sincerity of intention, purity of heart, repentance from committing sins, and meeting the demands of friends and the needy, he will purify his heart and endeavors to avoid from excesses and impurities.

Furthermore, invocation leads to self confidence and impedes man from sinking into hopelessness and encourages him to make further attempts to attain to his goals.

Finally, a significant point is to follow this brief discussion.

According to Islamic traditions, invoking God is required when man spares no effort in attaining to his goals, but his endeavors are of no avail; it is then that he invokes God Almighty to render him help. In other words, man may not invoke God Almighty in lieu of making his efforts, since in this case, his invocations will not be definitely answered.

As per a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"There are four groups whose invocations will not be answered: one who stays at home and asks God to grant him sustenance.

It is said unto him:

'Did I not ask you to endeavor?'

One who hurts their spouse and the latter prays to God to help them get rid of them.

It is said unto them:

'Did I not permit you to get divorce?'

One who squanders their possessions but invokes God to provide them with sustenance.

It is said unto them:

'Did I not provide you with injunctions as to moderation and economy? Did I not command you to manage your financial affairs wisely?'

One who loans their possession to someone without any witness and the receiver of the loan denies the receipt. The lender invokes God Almighty to make the denier acknowledge the loan.

It is said unto them:

'Did I not command you to take witnesses upon lending your possessions to others?'"[44]

It is needless to say that in such instances, such people do not take the required care as to making efforts and taking the precautions and entangled themselves by the undesirable consequences thereof and their invocations in this vein will not be answered.

Now it has been clarified why many an invocation are not answered: some people to desist from making efforts and seek refuge in prayers, but God Almighty shall never answer them. There exist other reasons for prayers not being answered; for instance, many a time, man makes mistakes as to distinction between gains and losses.

At times, he invokes God Almighty wholeheartedly to grant him something which is not to his interest and later on he may notice that his request was not to his interest.

For example, a patient or a child may ask their nurses to provide them with delicious foods but acting upon their requests will aggravate their ailment or their lives may be jeopardized. In such cases, the Most Compassionate and the Most Gracious Allah will never answer prayers but saves them for their Hereafter.

Furthermore, answering prayers are subject to conditions mentioned in Qur'anic Verses and Islamic traditions[45]. It is mentioned in numerous traditions that committing certain sins, e.g. malevolence, hypocrisy, delaying the establishment of daily prayers, slander, consumption of unlawful food, failure to pay alms tax and expending in Allah's Cause impedes prayers from being answered.[46]

The discussion closes with a significant tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).

In his Ihtijaj, Tabarsi cites a tradition from the Imam (as):

"The Noble Imam was asked:

'Does God Almighty not ask His servants to invoke Him and He will answer the prayers?' We see many people in need who pray but their prayers are not answered. We see many wronged people who invoke

God to render them victorious over wrong doers but they are not helped.'

The Imam (as) said:

'Woe unto you! No one invokes Him whose prayer is not answered. However, the wrong doers' invocations are not accepted unless they repent.

The prayers of the wronged will be answered and the evils are warded off and at times they are not apprised of the same or the rewards are abundantly saved for them for their time of need (Day of Resurrection). Whenever His servants invoke Him to grant them something against their benefits, He will not answer such prayers.[47]

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 61

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِراً إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لا يَشْكُرُونَ

61. Allah, it is He Who has made the night for you that you may rest therein and the day for you to see. Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind; yet, most of mankind give no thanks.

It is solely the Creator of the day and night and the Provider of our needs Who is worthy of being invoked. Since invoking God is secondary to knowing Him, the following Verse treats of the truths which raise the level of human understanding and meets one of the requirements of invocation which is setting one's hope in its being answered.

The blessed Verse says:

"Allah, it is He Who has made the night for you that you may rest therein and the day for you to see,"

since the darkness of night leads to the obligatory stoppage of daily activities on the one side and darkness per se engenders serenity and resting of body and soul and light leads to motion and activity on the other.

The blessed Verse says:

"the day for you to see"

so as to brighten the living environment and prepare it for all activities. It is worthy of note that ***mubsiran*** indicates "seeing" and thus depicting the day actually emphasizes making people see.

The blessed Verse further adds:

"Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind; yet, most of mankind give no thanks."

The precise order of the night and day and the consecution of light and darkness are instances of Divine Bounties and Favors bestowed upon servants considered among significant factors of the life of mankind and other living beings.

There will not be life and motion without light. Without temporary darkness, all creatures will be weakened and plant will wither. However, most of people take no account of such Divine Great Bounties and pass them unnoticed.

It is worthy of note that we normally expect a pronoun for the second

al-nas (***"people, mankind"***)***,***

namely:

"Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind; yet, most of them give no thanks,"

but the use of

"mankind"

instead of pronoun may indicate that uncultured mankind are ingratiate for Divine Blessings, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Qur'an[48]:

"and man is indeed an extreme wrong doer, a disbeliever."[49]

However, if man happens to have seeing eyes and a wise heart to perceive "the showers of His Boundless Mercy have penetrated to every spot and the banquet of his unstinted liberality is spread out everywhere," he will unconsciously express his gratitude and praise before God Almighty and will feel humble and inferior before Divine Mercy and Glory.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 62 - 63

ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَأَنَّى تُؤْفَكُونَ

كَذَلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

62. That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things: there is no god but Allah. How then are you turning away [***from the Path of Truth***]***?***
63. Thus were turned away those who used to deny the Ayat (***Verses, Signs***) ***of Allah.***

God Almighty Who is the Lord of mankind and the Creator of all beings is worthy of praise. One who

does not set his hope in the Origin of existence will deviate from the True Path.

The blessed Verse 62 opens with the Unity of Divine Lordship and closes with the Unity of Creatorship and Lordship, saying:

"That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things: there is no god but Allah."

Abundant Divine Bounties actually indicate His Lordship and expediency of His Acts. Creatorship of all things reveals His Unity of Lordship, since the Creator of all beings is the Possessor and Fosterer of them.

We know that Divine Creatorship does not designate that He creates all beings and then leaves them on their own, but all beings of the world of existence enjoy His Emanations at all times and such Creatorship is inseparable from Lordship. It is evident that God Almighty is solely worthy of praise and Divinity.

Thus,

"the Creator of all things"

serves as an argument for

"That is Allah, your Lord"

and

"There is no god but Allah"

is the conclusion.

Verse 62 closes thus:

"How then are you turning away [***from the Path of Truth***]***?"***

The question raised is:

"Why do you turn away from worshipping God Almighty and instead you turn to idolatry?"

It is noteworthy that tu'fakun is a verb in the passive voice designating that they make you turn away from the Path of Truth, as if idolaters are so weak minded that they lack free choice in their course of action.

Verse 63 lays emphasis on the foregoing points, saying:

"Thus were turned away those who used to deny the Ayat (***Verses, Signs***) ***of Allah."***

The verb form yajhadun derives from j–h–d designating denial of something entertained in one's heart, i.e. believing in something and denying the same or believing in the denial of something but proving the same.

Stingy and closefisted people who pretend to be poor are called jahd and ard jahda is applied to a land with less plants.[50] Some other lexicographers define jahd and juhud as thought accompanied by knowledge.[51]

Thus, the semantic range of jahd entails some obduracy and/or enmity against God Almighty.

Such people confront with truths with such attribute and they merely turn away from the Path of Truth, since a truth seeking man who is submitted to Divine Will may solely attain to the Truth which requires purification of the self and fearing God Almighty as a prerequisite for believing in Him, as reflected in the Holy Qur'an[52]:

"This is the Book whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to the God fearing pious."

1. 19:62
2. 13:35
3. Misbah by Shaykh, apud Tafsir Nur al–Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p.526.
4. 40:85
5. 47:9
6. 10:73
7. 21:69
8. 37:134
9. 12:21
10. 11:94
11. 21:88
12. 21:66
13. 10:
14. 3:55
15. 48:1
16. 3:123
17. 9:26
18. 48:4
19. 21:76
20. 42:26
21. 8:11
22. 14:11
23. 12:34
24. 71:26
25. 57:25
26. 4:54
27. 9:4
28. 9:4
29. 7:136
30. 3:124

31. 59:2
32. 61:9
33. 29:15
34. 8:18
35. 51:39-40
36. 18:28
37. 12:23
38. 40:27
39. Fakhr Razi's Majma' al-Bayan; Kashshaf; Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Safi; Ruh al-Bayan.
40. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 8, p. 528.
41. Ibid, p. 529.
42. Kafi, vol. 2, Bab Fadl al-Du'a ("Chapter on the Excellence of Invocation"), p. 338.
43. Makarim al-Akhlaq, apud al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 34, under 2:186.
44. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, Bab Du'a ("Chapter on Invocation"), hadith 2.
45. for details, see the exegesis of 2:186
46. Ma'ani al-Akhbar, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 534.
47. Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
48. 14:34
49. Tafsir al-Mizan; Ruh al-Ma'ani, under the blessed Verse in question.
50. Raghib's Mufradat, under j-h-d.
51. Lisan al-'Arab, apud Jawhari.
52. 2:2

Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 64 - 85

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 64

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَاراً وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

64. Allah, it is He Who has made for you the earth as a dwelling place and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape and made your shapes good and has provided you with good things. That is Allah, your Lord: so Bountiful and Exalted is Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

The earth as a serene dwelling place, fashioning the sky, creation of man, and providing him with blessings are all for fostering him as his good shape and pure provision and sustenance are manifestations of Divine Lordship.

The blessed Verse in question resumes the discussion on Divine Favors bestowed upon servants so as to accord them further knowledge and hope in whose light they may invoke God Almighty and their

prayers be answered.

It is worthy of note that the preceding Verses treated of temporal bounties, i.e. night and day, and the blessed Verse in question deals with spatial Bounties, e.g. the earth as a dwelling place and the elevated canopy of the sky, saying:

“Allah, it is He Who has made for you the earth as a dwelling place.”

God Almighty created all the prerequisites for the establishment of a secure and serene dwelling place, free from quaking, harmonious with human physical and psychological aspects, and abounding in many Bounties encompassing all human needs.

The blessed Verse further adds:

“and the sky as a canopy.”

The word bana’, according to Ibn Mansur’s Lisan al-’Arab, is applied to tents and canopies and the like used by Bedouin.

The sky is interestingly depicted as a canopy surrounding the earth. It is worthy of note that the word sky indicates the atmosphere surrounding the earth like a canopy.

This great Divine canopy serves as a means of protection against severe sun shine without which the rays of the sun and the fatal rays of galaxies would have perished all living beings on the face of the earth.

It is for the same reason that astronauts have to constantly wear specially heavy and valuable clothes to protect them against such rays.

Furthermore, the “canopy” protects the earth from meteors constantly absorbed toward the earth and burns them at the outset of entering the atmosphere due to their velocity and pressure so that their ashes calmly subside on the earth.

The same idea is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an[1]:

“And We have made the heaven a roof, safe and well guarded.”

The blessed Verse proceeds from physical to spiritual issues:

“[***He is the One Who***] ***has given you shape and made your shapes good.”***

With his erect, well built body, and beautiful visage, man is superior to other living beings and he is thus able to perform all kinds of delicate or heavy tasks and live conveniently and enjoy the bounties of life. Contrary to most of animals that use their mouths nozzles to eat and drink, man uses his hands to select

healthy food, peel fruits, and dispense with useless pieces.

A number of Qur'anic exegets interpret

***sura* (*literally "visage, face"*)**

herein in the sense of outward and inward aspects designating faculties and tastes created by God Almighty in man through which he is superior to all living beings.

The fourth and the last Bounty mentioned in the blessed Verse is that God Almighty

"has provided you with good things."

The word tayyibat is of broad semantic range encompassing any good and pure thing, e.g. food, clothes, spouses, homes, mounts, and even good words and conversations. Man may render such bounties impure through ignorance, but God Almighty has created them pure.

Following an enumeration of these four great Bounties, which are two by two granted to the sky and the earth and man, the blessed Verse says:

"That is Allah, your Lord: so Bountiful and Exalted is Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

The Bestower of all these bounties upon mankind is the Creator of the world of existence and He is worthy to be worshipped for His Lordship.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 65

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

65. He is the Ever-Living, there is no god but Allah. Therefore, invoke Him, having made your worship pure for Him Alone. All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

Real existence belongs to God but the existence of other beings is limited, transient, and contingent. The blessed Verse treats of knowing God Almighty and invoking and worshipping Him.

The question of the Unity of worshipping God Almighty proceeds from a different course in this Verse which is acknowledgement of existence in the real sense of the word as belonging to Him Alone, saying:

"He is the Ever-Living,"

since His Existence springs from His Own Essence Which is Independent of other beings and Immortal. It is solely God Almighty Who possesses such Attributes and all living beings besides Him lead a limited and transient life which springs from Divine Essence.

The object of worship is supposed to be Ever-Living as:

"There is no god but Allah. Therefore, invoke Him, having made your worship pure for Him Alone."

Man is supposed to leave aside all beings besides God Almighty, since they are transient and constantly change in the course of their life.

"You are not subject to alteration. You are the only Being Who has not died and shall not die."

The blessed Verse closes thus:

"All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of the worlds."

The statement is actually an admonition to Allah's servants who glorify and praise Him for the Bounties mentioned in the preceding Verses, the Bounties encompassing all human existence, particularly that of life.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 66

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَمَّا جَاءَنِيَ الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأُمِرْتُ أَنْ أُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

66. Say: "I have been forbidden to worship those whom you worship besides Allah, since there have come to me Signs from my Lord and I am commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds.

Believers may not suffice to believe in Allah in their hearts, but they are supposed to express their belief. Association with Allah's friends and dissociation from His enemies should accompany each other. Having not warded all kinds of polytheism and disbelief, we may not be monotheists in the real sense of the word.

The blessed Verse in question makes a conclusion of the foregoing discussions on Divine Unity and so as to render polytheists and idolaters desperate, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is thus addressed:

"I have been forbidden to worship those whom you worship besides Allah, since there have come to me Signs from my Lord and I am commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds."

The blessed Verse impedes man from idolatry and produces manifest, sensible, intellectual, and narrational arguments which have come to him from his Lord.

It is also an injunction as to submission against

"the Lord of the worlds"

which presents a sufficient argument for total submission against His Pure Essence.

It is worthy of note that injunction (amr) and prohibition (nahy) are distinct in this Verse, injunction toward total submission before God Almighty and prohibition from idolatry.

The reason lying behind the distinction may lie in the fact that in terms of worshipping idols, man worships what he is prohibited from it, but in terms of worshipping God Almighty, man, besides worshipping Him, is supposed to submit to His Commands.

It is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[2]:

"Say: 'Indeed I am commanded to worship Allah by obeying Him and doing religious deeds sincerely for His sake only. And I am commanded [***this***] ***in order that I may be the first of those who submit themselves to Allah as Muslims."***

It is worthy of note that the Verse is saying that I have received injunctions and prohibitions, namely you are supposed to take care of yourselves without provoking their sense of obduracy.

The last word about the preceding Verses is that the Divine Attribute:

"Lord of the worlds"

is reiterated in three consecutive Verses:

"So Bountiful and Exalted is Allah, the Lord of the worlds,"
"All the praises and thanks are to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,"
"I am commanded to submit to the Lord of the worlds."

The logical sequence is evident: Divine Immortality and Bountifulness; all praises and thanks are devoted to His Pure Essence; His Sacred Essence as the only Object of worship.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 67

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلاً ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُونُوا شُيُوخاً وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُتَوَفَّى مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلاً مُسَمّىً وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

67. It is He Who has created you from dust, then from semen, then from a clot, then brings you forth as an infant [***from womb***]***, then*** [***makes you grow***] ***to reach the age of full strength, and afterwards to be old, though some among you die before*** [***you reach an advanced age, but some of you live and***] ***reach an appointed term in order that you may understand.***

Man is created from clay rather than from animals through evolution. It is Divine Omnipotence that

makes the reasoning and thinking man from inanimate clay. The best subject of intellection is man's creation whose death does not lead to his perdition but it is taking his soul from his body.

Thus the blessed Verse in question says:

"It is He Who has created you from dust, then from semen, then from a clot, then brings you forth as an infant [***from womb***]***, then*** [***makes you grow***] ***to reach the age of full strength, and afterwards to be old, though some among you die before*** [***you reach an advanced age, but some of you live and***] ***reach an appointed term in order that you may understand."***

Therefore, the first stage is man's creation from clay, since all nutrient elements constituting man and his semen stem from clay. The next stage is that of semen which concerns all men but Adam and his wife, Eve.

The third stage is the one in which semen has evolved into a clot. The fourth stage is that of mudgha ("small chunk of chewed flesh") in which organs begin to develop and it is the stage of sense and movement. The Holy Qur'an does not make mention of these three stages herein but it is mentioned elsewhere in It.

The fourth stage is mentioned herein as that of the birth of the embryo. The fifth stage is that of development of physical strength maintained by some as the age of thirty in which physical strength reaches its zenith, though some have considered it earlier or later than thirty years of age; however it is different in different people.

The mentioned age is termed as:

"utmost growth or maturity" (***bulugh ashadd***)

in the Holy Qur'an. After the age of thirty, faculties begin to regress. The sixth stage is old age which comes in time. Finally, the last stage arrives which is the end of life and man is taken to his immortal dwelling place.

Taking some many expressions, systematic and well measured developments there remains no room for doubts as to the Omnipotence and Glory of the Origin of the world of existence and His Bounties and Favors.

It is worthy of note that the clause:

"He created you" (***khalaqakum***)

is employed with regard to the first four stages concerning man's creation from clay, semen, clot, and the birth of the infant in which no role is stipulated for man; however, the three stages following birth, i.e. the stage of attaining to the zenith of physical strength, old age, and the end of life, the clauses:

***“that you reach”* (*li-tablughu*)**

and

***“that you be”* (*li-takunu*)**

are employed which refer to man’s existential independence following birth and probably to the fact that the three stages may be attained earlier or later owing to man’s prudence or imprudence; in other words, man may cause his early old age or early death mentioning which makes a reference to Qur’anic precise expressions.

The verbal form:

***yutawaffa* (*“you die”*)**

referring to death indicates that within the context of Qur’anic Verses, death is not equal to perdition, but angels of death take human soul to the other world.

This recurrent Qur’anic motif explicitly reveals the Islamic attitude toward death thus totally stripping death of the material concept which is perdition and non-existence and considers it as a gate to the world of immortality.

The clause:

“some among you die before* [*you reach an advanced age*]*”

may either refer to the period of life prior to death or to all the preceding stages in which man may come to the end of his life.

It is also worthy of note that all these stages are intertwined with

***“then”* (*thumma*)**

indicating consecutiveness with interludes except the last stage which is the end of life connected with

***“and”* (*wa*).**

This different expression may demonstrate that reaching the end of life does not necessarily occur following attaining to an old age, since:

“many a youth died before reaching advanced years”

and even some children or young adults die before reaching youth.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 68

هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا قَضَى أَمْراً فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

68. It is He Who gives life and causes death. And when He decides upon a thing He says to it only: "Be!" and it is.

It is solely God Almighty Who gives life and causes death. He is omnipotent and nothing lies beyond His Omnipotence. His Will is inevitable and irresistible.

The blessed Verse treats of the most significant manifestations of Divine Omnipotence which is the question of life and death. Despite scientific advancement, the two phenomena are still dilemmas. Life and death in the broader sense of the words as applicable to plants, animals, and human beings in diverse forms are within Divine Omnipotence.

It is worthy of note that living beings, from monocellular to gigantic beings living in the dark depths of oceans to the birds soaring in the sky, to planktons, to trees whose heights reach tens of meters each have a particular type of life and circumstances. It is in the same vein that they differ in the manner of death.

Forms of life are indubitably the most diverse and the most wondrous forms of the world of creation, particularly coming from the inanimate into the animate world and vice versa are one of the most amazing manifestations of Divine Omnipotence.

It is needless to say that none of these intricate and significant issues constitutes any difficulty before Him and they come into being so long as He commands them to do likewise.

Therefore, the blessed Verse thus closes:

"And when He decides upon a thing He says to it only: 'Be!' and it is."

The employment of

"Be"

and

"and it is"

indicates the incompetence of words in conveying meaning, otherwise there would be no need to such words since Divine Will directly leads to the creation of the being.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 69 - 70

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ أَنَّى يُصْرَفُونَ

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِالْكِتَابِ وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا بِهِ رُسُلَنَا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

69. See you not those who dispute about the Ayat** (**Verses, Signs**) **of Allah? How are they turning away** [**from Truth**]**?
***70. Those who deny the Book and that with which We sent Our Messenger, they will come to know** [**the consequences of their acts**].*

Familiarity with the history of ancient obdurate peoples provides modern peoples with lessons and peace of mind. Disputing about Qur'anic is on a par with going astray; that is why warning could be quite fruitful in propagation.

The blessed Verse in question treats of those who dispute about Divine Ayat and deny the arguments and Calls of Messengers. The fate of such people is vividly depicted in these Verses.

Verse 69 opens thus:

"See you not those who dispute about the Ayat** (**Verses, Signs**) **of Allah? How are they turning away** [**from Truth**]**?"

such disputes are accompanied by obduracy and enmity and these blind imitations and unfounded biases lead them astray, since Truth manifests itself solely through the spirit of truth-seeking.

The rhetorical question addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) indicates that taking into account their state, any impartial person wonders at their error and asks himself:

"what do they not see the truth despite the availability of so many clear Signs and Verses?"

Verse 70 adds:

"Those who deny the Book and that with which We sent Our Messenger."

It is worthy of note that the clause:

"those who dispute about the Ayat** (**Verses, Signs**) **of Allah"

is attested thrice in the Chapter in question[3] and the contextual meaning indicates that the Ayat of Allah refers to the Signs of Prophethood and the contents of the Scriptures.

Since the Signs of Divine Unity and the issues concerning Resurrection were included in Scriptures, they were also subject to disputes. Does the reiteration lays emphasis on this significant topic or some other issue were intended by the same?

The latter sounds more viable, since each of the here Verses treat of some specific topic. Verse 56 deals with the incentives of such disputes, namely vanity and arrogance, whereas Verse 35 discusses their worldly chastisement which is sealing up their hearts by God Almighty.

The blessed Verse in question[4] treats of their otherworldly chastisement and kinds of torments to be inflicted on them in Hell.

It is also noteworthy that the verbal form:

yujadilun (*"they dispute"*)

is in the present tense and indicates progression. It is a reference to those who deny Divine Signs and verses so as to justify their vicious false beliefs and vicious deeds and preoccupy themselves with baseless disputes.

Thus they are warned at the close of the Verse:

*"[**Soon**] **they will come to know** [**the consequences of their acts**]."*

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 71 - 72

إِذِ الْأَغْلَالُ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَالسَّلَاسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ

فِي الْحَمِيمِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ

71. When iron collars will be rounded over their necks and the chains they shall be dragged along,
72. In the boiling water, then they will be burned in the Fire.

The word ***aghlal*** is the plural form of ghull indicating "iron collar" as a token of debasement and denigration.

Salasil is the pluralized form of silsila ("chain") and the verbal forms ***yusbahun*** and ***yusjarun*** designate "they are dragged along" and "they are burned" respectively. Depiction of Resurrection and the diverse kinds of torments as reflected in Divine Revelation warns and fosters man and creates the fear of God in him.

Thus the two blessed Verses in question say:

"When iron collars will be rounded over their necks and the chains they shall be dragged along in the boiling water, then they will be burned in the Fire."

Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that they are filled with fire, though the two meanings are not inconsistent. The torment is actually a reaction against the deeds of those who obdurately and arrogantly disputed about Divine Ayat and denied them out of vanity and ignorance.

Thus, they entangle themselves in the chains of blind imitations and biases and on that Day, they will be fettered with iron collars and shackles with utmost humility. They will be dragged along in boiling water and they will turn into kindling in Hell.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 73 - 74

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَدْعُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ شَيْئاً كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ الْكَافِرِينَ

73. Then it will be said to them: "Where are [*all*] ***those whom you used to associate in worship as partners***
74. Besides Allah?" They will say: "They have vanished from us [*then thus they will lie*]***: Nay, we did not invoke anything before." Thus Allah leads astray the disbelievers.***

The Day of Resurrection is the day of manifestation of truths and fruitlessness of polytheism. The blessed Verses are saying that besides inflicting physical torments upon them, they shall suffer from psychological excruciating torments.

"Where are [*all*] ***those whom you used to associate in worship as partners Besides Allah"***

so that they may intercede on your behalf and save you from such painful torments and the blazing Hellfire? Now, where are they to intercede on your behalf?

Bowing their heads in shame, they will reply:

"They have vanished from us and perished such that we know nothing of them."

As reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, these false objects of worship are indubitably in Hell and most probably they are beside their former worshippers, but since they are ineffective, it seems as if they are deaf and blind!

Then they notice that their former confession to their praiseworthiness is a stigma of disgrace on them; as a consequence of which they deny their praiseworthiness, saying:

"Nay, we did not invoke anything before."

They try to say that they were not but illusions, like a mirage in the desert of life that we regarded as real springheads; however they now know that they were names devoid of meaning whose worship was solely vanity and error. Thus they express an indubitable reality.

Another possible interpretation is that they try to tell lies, assuming that they may deliver themselves from disgrace and shame through lying, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an5:

"there will then be [***left***] ***no excuses for them but to say: 'By Allah, our Lord, we were not those who joined others in worship with Allah.' Behold! How they lie against themselves! But the*** [***lie***] ***which they invented will disappear from them."***

Thus Verse 74 closes:

"Thus Allah leads astray the disbelievers."

Their disbelief and obduracy serve as veils covering their hearts and thought, as a consequence of which they deviate from the Straight Path and go astray. On the Day of Resurrection, they shall be deprived of Paradise and shall enter Hell. Thus God Almighty leads disbelievers astray.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 75 - 76

ذَلِكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ

ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ

75. That [***torment***] ***was because you had been exulting in the earth without any right and that you used to rejoice extremely*** [***in your error***].
76. Enter the gates of Hell to abide therein and what an evil abode of the arrogant!

The Islamic faith is in man's natural and primordial disposition (fitra). It is not against happiness which is in man's original nature. It is only inappropriate exultations which are subject to criticism a number of whose instances are reflected in the Holy Qur'an.

The blessed Verse 75 says:

"That [***torment***] ***was because you had been exulting in the earth without any right and that you***

used to rejoice extremely [***in your error***]*."*

They rejoiced in denying the Prophets, slaying believers, and suppressing the deprived and the weak. They were falsely proud of committing sins and breaking the law. Now they have to meet the consequences of such improper exultation, arrogance, negligence, and concupiscence in shackles and fetters and amid blazing flames of Hellfire.

The verbal form ***tafrahun*** derives from f–r–h ("exult, rejoice") which may be employed in an ameliorative sense, as in 30:4–5:

"And on that Day, the believers will rejoice [***the people of the Book against the Magians***] ***with the help of Allah,"***

or a pejorative one, as reflected in the story of Korah6:

"Remember when his people said to him: 'Do not exult in vain, since Allah likes not those who exult vainly.'"

The difference between the two connotations should be distinguished and it is evident that it is employed pejoratively in the blessed Verse in question.

The verbal form tamrahun derives from m–r–h and according to a number of Qur'anic exegets and lexicographers it designates

"rejoice excessively."

Some maintain that the word connotes rejoice in vain but some others hold that it implies rejoicing by making use of Divine Bounties in vain.

These senses apparently refer to the same signification, since excessive rejoicing leads to error and is accompanied by sins, impurities, and concupiscent desires.

Such vain exultations imbued with arrogance, neglect, vanity, and concupiscent desires lead man astray in the twinkling of an eye and impede him from comprehending the truth. Such attitude renders realities facetious and truths, vain. The fate reflected in the preceding Verses is in store for such people.

Verse 76 is addressed to the people condemned to torment who are being asked to

"enter the gates of Hell to abide therein and what an evil abode of the arrogant!"

The Verse is a further emphasis on the fact that misfortunes stem from vanity and arrogance, serving as the origin of all evils, a veil before the truth seeking eyes of man, resistance to Messengers, and persistence in error.

Again, we come across

“the gates”

of Hell in the blessed Verse in question. Does entering the gates of Hell indicate that each group enters a specific gate?

Or a group enters different gates? It may imply that there are different gates and levels in Hell, in the manner of terrible prisons with labyrinthine corridors with many cells, and a number of those who were obdurately in error have to descend all these levels and find their everlasting abode on the lowest level at the depth of Hell!

In this vein, a tradition is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) as the interpretation of a Qur’anic Verse[7]:

“It [***Hell***] ***has seven gates, for each of those gates is a*** [***specific***] ***group*** [***of sinners***] ***assigned,”***

saying:

“Hell has seven gates. It has seven levels on top of each other.”

Then, he laid one hand on the other, saying:

“Like this!”[8]

There is another interpretation according to which the gates of Hell, like those of Paradise, refer to different factors leading man to Hell or Paradise, e.g. sins and good righteous deeds, as reflected in Islamic traditions. The number seven indicates multiplicity rather than number. It is worthy of note that the eight gates of Paradise designate that Bounties exceed torments.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 77

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَإِمَّا نُرِيَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ نَتَوَفَّيَنَّكَ فَإِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُونَ

77. Therefore, [***O Prophet***] ***be patient! Indeed the Promise of Allah is true and whether We show you some part of what We have promised them or We cause you to die*** [***before that***] ***then*** [***in any case***] ***still it is to Us they all shall be returned.***

The Veracity of Divine Promises is the source of patience and serenity, since Divine Acts occur timely.

Resuming the foregoing discussions on disbelievers’ impediments and their arrogance and vanity and denial of Divine Verses and Signs, the Noble Prophet (S) is thus consoled:

"Therefore, [O Prophet] be patient! Indeed the Promise of Allah is true."

In other words, the Promise of victory to the Noble Prophet (S) and the Warning against the excruciating chastisement of the arrogant are both true and shall be indubitably fulfilled.

In order to hinder the enemies of Truth from conceiving that any delay in their chastisement may deliver them from Divine chastisement, the Verse further adds:

"If we show you some part of what We have promised them or We cause you to die [prior to their entanglement with torments] then still [it does not matter, since] it is to Us they all shall be returned [and We shall fulfill Our Promises]."

The Noble Prophet's (S) obligation was to clearly declare his Call and impart the Truth to all people such that the hearts of the awakened people may be enlightened through your propagation of the Islamic faith and there remains no room for the opponents of the true faith.

The Noble Prophet (S) was merely asked to attend to the fulfillment of his obligation without feeling sympathy for the affliction of the obdurate disbelievers with Divine torments. The Verse is evidently a clear warning against them so they know that they shall be entangled with Divine torment in the Hereafter as some of them met their dire ends on the battlefield of Badr.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 78

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلاً مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ لَمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قُضِيَ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

78. And verily We have sent Messengers before you of some of them We have related to you their story. And of some We have not related to you their story and it was not given to any Messenger that he should bring a sign except by the Leave of Allah. But, when comes the Commandment of Allah [the Day of Resurrection], the matter will be decided with truth and the followers of falsehood will then be at loss.

One of the means of education and guidance, made use of many a time in the Holy Qur'an, is to narrate the history of the ancients and good models. The Day of Resurrection is the Day of Divine Judgment and the disgrace of the followers of falsehood.

To further console the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the Prophets of ancient peoples who were entangled with such difficulties but pursued the propagation of their teachings despite the impediments; as a consequence of which they became victorious:

"And verily We have sent Messengers before you of some of them We have related to you their

story. And of some We have not related to you their story”

each of whom faced such intolerable vicissitudes and many a vain and obdurate disbeliever; nevertheless, finally Truth prevailed and wrong doers and sinners were vanquished.

Since obdurate and querulous polytheists and disbelievers asked Messengers to show unto them their miracles at all times and the polytheists contemporaneous with the Prophet of Islam (S) requested the same, the blessed Verse in question further adds:

“And it was not given to any Messenger that he should bring a sign except by the Leave of Allah.”

All miracles are wrought by Divine Will rather than by disbelievers’ requests who consider them to be playthings.

Thus, the Noble Prophet (S) may not accept their requested miracles; rather God Almighty made evident unto people what was required for public guidance at the hands of Prophets.

The blessed Verse addresses with a serious and warning tone the disbelievers who said unto the Noble Prophet (S) that had he been right, how come that Divine torment would not have been sent unto them.

Thus the blessed Verse warns them:

“But, when comes the Commandment of Allah [***the Day of Resurrection***]***, the matter will be decided with truth and the followers of falsehood will then be at loss.”***

On that Day, no repentance shall be accepted and all the ways of returning to Allah shall be obstructed. Moans and cries shall be of no avail.

It is on that Day that the followers of falsehood shall clearly perceive that they have missed their opportunities without accruing any righteous good deeds, rather they have been entangled with Divine Wrath and excruciating torments.

Why then do they ask for the coming of that irreversible Day? As per this interpretation, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the torment of desperateness.

However, some Qur’anic exegets maintain that the blessed Verse refers to the Divine Command of inflicting torments upon wrong doers on the Day of Resurrection. It shall be on that Day that the deeds of all men shall be judged with truth and the followers of falsehood shall be apprised of their total loss.

The interpretation is substantiated by another Qur’anic Verse[9]:

“And on the Day that the Hour will be established, on that Day the followers of falsehood shall lose [***everything***]***.”***

Phrases like:

“Divine Decree”

are applied to the torment in this world in numerous Qur’anic Verses[10]. The Verse may be of a broader semantic range to encompass the torments in this world and the Hereafter. It is worthy of note that the total loss of the followers of falsehood become evident in both.

It is also noteworthy that according to a number of narrations there was a clown in Medina who make people laugh and at times said that Imam Sajjad ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) had irritated him since he had not been successful in making him laugh.

Thus, one day the Imam (as) was passing by and the clown took away his aba (‘aba’), but the Noble Imam (as) did not take any heed of him. The Imam’s companions followed the clown and restored the cloak. Imam (as) inquired them about his identity.

They replied:

“He is a clown who makes Medinans laugh.”

The Noble Imam (as) asked them to say unto him:

“There shall be a Day on which followers of falsehood shall be at loss.”

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 79 - 81

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ

وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ فَأَيَّ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُنْكِرُونَ

79. Allah it is He Who has made quadrupeds for you that you may ride on some of them and of some you eat.
80. And you have benefits from them and that you may reach by their means a desire that is in your breasts and on them and on ships you are carried.
81. And He shows you His Ayat [i.e., Signs and Verses, at all times]. Which then of the Ayat of Allah do you deny?

Taking heed of Divine Bounties is the best means of development and reinforcement of knowledge and

gratitude. In this vein, attending to those Bounties which may be perceived and used by all people at any time and any place is the best way.

Thus, these Verses refer to the Signs of Divine Omnipotence and His All-Embracing Bounties and reveal some of them so that people may be further acquainted with His Glory and thereby arouse the sense of gratitude as a means of knowing God Almighty in them.

The blessed Verse reads:

"Allah it is He Who has made quadrupeds for you that you may ride on some of them and of some you eat."

Some cattle, e.g. sheep, are used for their meet and some larger ones are used as mounts as well, e.g. camel which is the ship of parched deserts and is also used for its meat.

The Arabic word ***an'am*** (plural form of na'am) was originally employed in the sense of camel but its semantic range further developed to include camel, cow, and sheep. The word is a cognate of ni'ma ("delight"), since cattle are among the delights of man.

Even today, despite the availability of vehicles used on the land and in the air, at times men have solely to make use of cattle for crossing sandy deserts and narrow mountainous passageways.

The creation of diverse quadrupeds, particularly owing to their domesticability, is at times stronger than the most powerful men serve as Great Signs of God Almighty. There are small beasts of prey which are dangerous for men, but at times, a child may lead a file of enormous camels and

"he may take them where ever he wishes!"

Besides, man makes many other uses of them as reflected in Verse 80:

"And you have benefits from them."

Man makes use of them for their milk, fleece, hair, hide, and even their feces as fertilizer. In short, there is nothing useless in cattle; even some drugs are made from them.

The blessed Verse proceeds to add that there was another reason for their creation:

"that you may reach by their means a desire that is in your breasts."

A number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that the Verse makes a reference to the transportation of consignments with quadrupeds as reflected in the preceding clauses, but

"a desire that is in your breasts"

may also indicate personal uses, such as making use of them for the purposes of recreation, emigration,

travel, races, gaining prestige, and the like.

Since they are all used for traveling on the land, the Verse closes thus:

“on them and on ships you are carried.”

The employment of the phrase

“on them” (***‘alayha***)

whose antecedent is

“quadrupeds”

precedes

“ships” (***fulk***)

indicates that God Almighty provided men with means of transportation in deserts and seas so that they may reach their destinations conveniently. God Almighty created a quality in ships that despite their heaviness, they stay afloat. He set order in the flow of winds such that they may be used for sailing and “visiting friends.”

Verse 81 lays further emphasis on Divine Bounties and asks mankind to bear testimony to them:

“And He shows you His Ayat [***i.e., Signs and Verses, at all times***]. ***Which then of the Ayat of Allah do you deny?”***

Neither His physical nor His non-physical Signs, e.g. man’s creation out of clay, developments of embryo and fetus, the stages of development following birth, and His Signs concerning life and death, are undeniable. Divine Signs and Manifestations are visible everywhere, but despite such undeniable evidence, some men deny them.

The eminent Qur’anic exeget, Tabarsi, maintains that such denial may spring from the following:

1. Following concupiscent desires leads man to make attempts at concealing the Truth with unfounded doubts and act upon his vain desires since acknowledgement of the Truth restricts him through obligations. However, despite evident arguments, they fail to acknowledge such obligations and deny the Truth.

2. Blind imitation of others, particularly their ancestors, thus making attempts at concealing the Truth.

3. False biases and beliefs of their predecessors which have penetrated their minds and impede impartial investigation of Divine Signs; as a consequence of which they fail to perceive them.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 82

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَآثَاراً فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

82. Have they not traveled through the land and seen what was the end of those before them** [**and the manner of their perdition**]**? They were more in number than them and mightier in strength and in traces in the land; yet all that they used to earn availed them not.

One of the Qur'anic criticisms is failing to travel so as to acquire knowledge and experience. Disbelievers' opposition against the Noble Prophet (S) stemmed from their vanity for their large number and might.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an says that God Almighty destroyed those mightier than them and one of the reasons lying behind the fall of civilizations is opposition against Prophets and turning away from Divine Commands.

Following the expression of Divine Omnipotence and reminding mankind of His Bounties, Prudence, and the orderly system of creation, the blessed Verse in question proceeds to warn disbelievers and remind them that those who deny Divine Signs and Verses and the Noble Prophet (S) should travel through the land and see the manner of their predecessors.

The blessed Verse reveals that the ruins of the cities of 'Ad and Thamud were still visible at the time of the Revelation of the blessed Verse, since it is encouraged herein to travel and see them and perceive that those people who were superior to them in terms of might, valiance, and number failed to resist Divine Wrath and were entangled with torment.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verses 83 - 84

فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهِ مُشْرِكِينَ

83. Then when their Messengers came to them with clear miracles, they were glad with that which they had of the knowledge** [**failing to acknowledge Prophets' logical arguments**] **and that** [**Divine Wrath**] **at which they used to mock, surrounded them.
84. Therefore, when they saw Our chastisement, they said: "We believe in Allah Alone and reject that we used to associate with Him as partners.

Divine appointment of Prophets to provide mankind with decisive arguments as to Divine Unity is one of Divine Acts.

It is worthy of note that human sciences and experiments may not substitute Divine teachings and render man needless of Prophets, since being arrogant of one's knowledge leads to derision of Divine Promises.

There have been people in human history who owing to the sciences which have led to the development of civilizations and accruing worldly possessions or due to their knowledge concerning their ancestors or other peoples imagine that they are needless of Divine Revelation and Prophetic teachings.

Men with small capacities, upon acquisition of limited knowledge or attainment to credentials and positions become arrogant.

According to the Holy Qur'an, there are three types of knowledge:

1. Fruitful knowledge which leads to human spiritual growth, as when Moses (as) said unto Khidr:

"May I follow you so that you teach me something of that knowledge which may lead to my [***spiritual***] ***growth"***[11].

2. Fruitless knowledge such as knowledge as to the precise number of the people of the Cave:

"[***Some***] ***say that they were three, the dog being the fourth among them; and*** [***others***] ***say they were five, the dog being the sixth, guessing at the unseen;*** [***yet others***] ***say they were seven and the dog being the eighth. Say*** [***O Muhammad***]***: 'My Lord knows best their number; none knows them but a few.' So debate not*** [***about their number***] ***except with the clear proof*** [***which We have revealed to you***]***, nor consult any of them about the people of the Cave"***[12].

3. Harmful knowledge, e.g. magic and sorcery for separating men from women.

It is said in Verse 83:

"Then when their Messengers came to them with clear miracles."

The antecedent of the pronoun is apparently the disbelievers entangled with torment the ruins of whose cities were still visible at the time of Revelation of the blessed Verse.

The Verse is saying that such people denied Divinely appointed Messengers and regarded their teachings as false tales. In fact, it was not their knowledge, but absolute ignorance since they were deprived of true knowledge which could lead to their deliverance from error.

They considered their apparent knowledge to be the true one:

(*“They know solely the outside appearance of the life of the world and they are heedless of the Hereafter,”*[13]).

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an that

“this is their utmost knowledge,”

i.e. their knowledge is limited to the affairs of this world rather than to those of the Hereafter. They imagined that they possessed knowledge, rejoiced at it, and derided Messengers; as a consequence of which they were surrounded with Divine torment.

According to Verse 84:

“Therefore, when they saw Our chastisement, they said: ‘We believe in Allah Alone and reject that we used to associate with Him as partners.’”

Nevertheless, upon tasting Divine chastisement, their repentance shall be of no avail, since they may not be provided with the opportunity to compensate for their vicious deeds and they are condemned by Allah Almighty to torment in Hell.

Surah al-Ghafir - Verse 85

فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا سُنَّتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكَافِرُونَ

85. Then their Faith could not avail them when they saw Our chastisement. This has been the way of Allah in dealing with His servants. And there the disbelievers shall be utterly at loss.

Unexpected happenings and emergencies flourish man’s original disposition and reminds disbelievers to embrace faith; however, converting to belief in Divine Unity is supposed to be out of free choice rather than obligation and desperateness.

It is Divine tradition that forced belief is of not avail. Divine tradition refers to what God Almighty made prevalent among His servants.

It is for the same reason that repentance after tasting Divine torment shall not be accepted by God Almighty thereby:

“disbelievers shall be at utterly at loss.”

According the blessed Verse in question, the laws and the system of creation are such that they come to their end upon death, since when man comes to the end of his life, whatever potential perfection he has comes to its end as a consequence of which his repentance shall not be accepted.

It would be of interest to make mention of two traditions at the end of the exegesis of the Chapter in question. According to the first tradition, a Christian man fornicated with a Muslim woman at the time of Mutawakkil, the ‘Abbasid Caliph. He converted before being chastised.

Yahya ibn Aktham said:

“His conversion to the Islamic faith solved the problem and there is no need to chastise him.”

A dispute arose between them concerning the same issue. Mutawakkil wrote a letter to Imam Hadi (as) and inquired about his opinion.

The Noble Imam (as) replied:

“Whenever a disbeliever violates a Muslim woman, he should be killed.”

A number of Muslim scholars found fault with his opinion saying that it was unprecedented in the Holy Qur’an and traditions (sunna).

Imam (as) referred to the Verse in question[14] and replied:

“Since the man is a Christian and he has converted to Islam at the time of chastisement, his conversion is of no avail and he has to be chastised.”[15]

The other tradition is narrated from Imam Rida (as) on the authority of Ibn Babiwayh as per which, the noble Imam (as) is asked:

“Why did God Almighty drowned Pharaoh when he believed in Divine Unity?”

the Imam (as) replied:

“He believed when he tasted Divine torment, and such belief shall not be accepted.”

Then He alluded to the blessed Verse in question.[16]

1. 21:32
2. 39:11-12
3. 35, 56, 70
4. 70
5. 6:23-24
6. 28:76
7. 15:44
8. Majma’ al-Bayan, vols. 5-6, p. 338 (under 15:44); Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 8, p. 289.
9. 45:27
10. e.g. 11:43, 76, 101
11. 18:66
12. 18:22

13. 30:7
14. 40:85
15. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
16. Atyab al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.

Surah Fussilat, Chapter 41, Verses 1-40

(Explained in detail)
Section (juz' 25)
Number of Verses: 54

General Overview of Surah Fussilat

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

This Meccan Chapter has fifty four Verses and whose title derives from the third Verse. It is also called "HM sajdah" since it opens with HM and it is the first among the four Chapters with obligatory prostrations. The Verses of the Chapter concerns Resurrection, history of ancient peoples, the Glory of the Holy Qur'an, and manifestations of Divine Omnipotence in the world of existence.

The Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition,

"One who recites HM sajdah, God Almighty will bestow upon him ten good deeds for each of its letters."[1]

According to another tradition, the Messenger of God (S) recited the Chapter every night before going to bed.[2] It is also worthy of note that the title of the Chapter, Fussilat, is taken from the third Verse, and the title HM sajdah derives from the opening of the Chapter, HM, as well as Verse 37, requiring an obligatory prostration.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 1 - 4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

تَنْزِيلٌ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

كِتَابٌ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ قُرْآناً عَرَبِيّاً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

بَشِيراً وَنَذِيراً فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لا يَسْمَعُونَ

1. HM
2. A Revelation [***the Qur'an***] ***from the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.***
3. A Book whereof the Verses are explained clearly, a Qur'an in Arabic for people who know.
4. [***A Book***] ***bearing glad tidings and warning, but most of them turn away, so they hear not*** [***the Qur'an***].

The Arabic words:

anzalna (***"We sent down"***)

and

tanzil (***"sending down"***)

are employed in the senses of sending down at one time and in time respectively.

To assume a common meaning out of the twain, one may say that the content of the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) at one time on the Night of Ordainment (Qadr) though the forms and words were revealed to him in time.

The mere mention of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an indicates guidance, decisiveness, exaltedness, wisdom, and mercy.

The Holy Qur'an makes use of every means of guidance (e.g. commanding the good and forbidding evil, stories and accounts of ancient peoples as lessons, arguments, allegories, exposition of Divine Bounties, future of mankind, the manner of Resurrection, factors leading to exaltedness and denigration) in details with decisiveness and unambiguity.

The Holy Qur'an draws a distinction between Truth and falsehood, believer and disbeliever, Paradise

and Hellfire, obedient and disobedient, obligatory and unlawful (acts), blessing and torment, good and evil, and the like.

The Holy Qur'an was revealed in eloquent Arabic.

The word:

'Arabi (***"Arabic"***)

designates both Arabic tongue and eloquent. It is needless to say that those familiar with eloquent Arabic may comprehend the eloquence of the Qur'an.

Verse 2 reads:

"A Revelation [***the Qur'an***] ***from the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful."***

The word

tanzil (***"Revelation"***)

is in the predicative position (khabar) whose subject (mubtada') is omitted, namely the Holy Qur'an is revealed by God Almighty Whose Mercy and Grace are bestowed upon all existent beings.

Verse 3 says:

"A Book whereof the Verses are explained clearly, a Qur'an in Arabic for people who know."

The Verse clearly makes a reference to the inimitability of the Qur'an which may be comprehended by the knowledgeable.

Those who pay no heed of the Qur'an are devoid of true knowledge. Divine Revelation of the Holy Qur'an from Divine realm to the material world aims at the knowledgeable who are capable of comprehending some secrets of the Holy Qur'an.

They know that it lies without human ability to bring the like of the Qur'an; as a consequence of which, they believe in Divine Revelation of the Holy Qur'an and the fact that it is revealed for the guidance of jinn and mankind, but the knowledgeable are solely capable of comprehending it.

Verse 4 says:

"[***A Book***] ***bearing glad tidings and warning, but most of them turn away, so they hear not*** [***the Qur'an***]***."***

The Arabic adjectives:

bashir (*“bearing glad tidings”*)

and

nadhir (*“bearing warning”*)

are two attributes of the Holy Qur’an designating the Qur’an bears glad tidings to believers that as a consequence of their righteous good deeds, exalted stations and Bounties in Paradise will fall into their share in the Hereafter.

It also warns disbelievers that they will be chastised with torments in Hell as a result of their evil deeds. Those who turn away from hearing the Holy Qur’an are unable to give their ears to the Holy Qur’an being recited owing to their vain desires.

The Holy Qur’an says elsewhere that disbelievers are deaf, dumb, and blind unable to comprehend Divine Word since they do not make use of their intellect.

Those who turn away from God Almighty turn toward nature, and are wholly preoccupied with mundane affairs and the pleasures of the flesh are actually unable to hear the Truth. Such people may not endure to hear Qur’anic Verses being recited.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 5

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكِنَّةٍ مِمَّا تَدْعُونَا إِلَيْهِ وَفِي آذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَمِنْ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَاعْمَلْ إِنَّنَا عَامِلُونَ

5. And they say: “Our hearts are wrapped up in coverings from that to which you invite us and in our ears is deafness and between us and you is a screen: so work you [***on your way***]. ***Indeed, we are working*** [***on our way***]***.”***

The Arabic word akinna is the plural form of kinan which indicates a piece of fabric in which something is wrapped up. The word waqr indicates deafness.[3]

Disbelievers rigorously took a fivefold stance against the Messenger of God (S) and the Holy Qur’an:

1. Turning away and keeping distance against them:

(***“But most of them turn away, so they hear not*** [***the Qur’an***]***,”***[4]).

2. Unpreparedness for acknowledging the Truth:

(***“Our hearts are wrapped up in coverings from that to which you invite us”***).

3. Failing to listen to the Messages:

(*“In our ears is deafness”*).

4. Making mention of impediments, namely the covering of self-conceit, worshipping mammon, and the like.

5. Persisting obdurately in their error

(*“Indeed, we are working* [*on our way*]*”*).

God Almighty bestows His Bounties upon man and sends down His Revelation springing from His Fountainhead of Mercy, but disbelievers are obdurate and turn away from Truth.

If the audience be not prepared, neither Divine Revelation and Mercy nor Scriptures nor its glad tidings and warnings shall be of no avail, since obduracy and bias cast their veils onto their hearts.

It is in this vein that the blessed Verse says that when disbelievers noticed that they had sunk into shadows as if they failed to hear Qur’anic Verses, they said that their hearts had been wrapped up in natural covering and they were deaf such that they were unable to hear Qur’anic Verses.

In other words, they said that there had been a veil of ignorance and arrogance between them and God Almighty such that the Messenger of God (S) could not expect them to turn to Qur’anic Verses and each of the parties was supposed to be preoccupied with their own affairs.

Surah Fussilat – Verses 6-7

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُوحَى إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ وَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ

الَّذِينَ لا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ

6. Say [***O Prophet*** (***S***)]***: “I am only a human being like you*** [***the difference is that***] ***it is revealed to me that your God is One God; therefore take the Straight Path toward Him and seek forgiveness of Him and woe to the polytheists.***
7. Those who give not the alms tax and they are disbelievers in the Hereafter.

In Qur’anic terms, indifference toward a number of Divine Commands is regarded as disbelief and polytheism.

It is said concerning pilgrimage to Mecca that:

“Pilgrimage to Mecca is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the expenses, and whoever disbelieves, then Allah sands not in need of any of the both worlds”5.

Regarding non-performance of daily prayers, the Messenger of God (S) said:

“Any Muslim who fails to perform obligatory prayers is on a par with disbelievers.”[6]

Concerning failing to pay alms tax, the blessed Verse in question reads:

“Woe to the polytheists, those who give not the alms tax.”

Alms tax (zakat) is a source of revenue for the Islamic government and failing to settle the same will be equal to failing to recognize the monotheism or disbelieving in the Hereafter which is on a par with disbelief.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question is addressed to the exalted Messenger of Allah (S), asking him to say unto those who are in error and raise objections against you saying that you eat, sleep, and marry like them, assuming that you are like them, pursuing pleasures of the flesh, such as property, exalted ranks, sovereignty and you lay claims to divinity.

Say unto them that you are neither an angel nor a genie, but you are a human being like them in terms of eating, sleeping, and other natural acts. Your only privilege is that Divine Revelation is communicated to you. Your Creator, Origin, and Resurrection are the same.

You are supposed to worship him and solely invoke Him for support. It is a quite logical and clear statement.

If you render the veil of arrogance, bias, and ignorance and be moderate in human attributes and turn away from bestial desires, you will perceive through your intellect and conscience that your source of support is the One who brought you from non-existence into existence and everything lies within His Omnipotence.

Thus, you will perceive the manifestation of His Unity emanated to all beings.

The blessed Verse closes with an injunction to mankind as to perseverance in their belief in monotheism and invoke God Almighty to forgive their sins as polytheists and disbelievers will be sunk in denigration and humility.

Verse 7 treats of polytheists’ attributes: failure to pay alms tax and denial of the Hereafter. The blessed Verse explicitly indicates that paying alms tax serves as a trial for believers’ belief in the Hereafter, since mundane property is loved by people and it may not be easily forsaken.

According to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S),

“Failing to pay alms tax is on a par with disloyalty and polytheism.”[7]

As per another Prophetic tradition,

“One who does not pay any alms tax will die a Jew or a Christian.”[8]

Surah Fussilat – Verse 8

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ

8. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous good deeds, for them will be an endless reward that will never stop.

Faith and righteous good deeds are inseparable. Those who do righteous good deeds in this world without expecting any reward will avail themselves of Divine Bounties and Rewards. God Almighty grants His Rewards non gratia.

It would be unbefitting to expect remuneration for our insignificant favors. The blessed Verse is saying that believers enjoy permanent and endless rewards.

Some Qur’anic exegets maintain that mamnun designates expecting reward or remuneration and some others take it in the sense of innumerable and endless. There are still some other exegets holding that the sustenance granted to believers is non gratia and the Provider does not denigrate His Favors.

It is worthy of note that God Almighty is Most–Bountiful and Most–Gracious and belief and righteous good deeds are both possible through His Favor and the Rewards promised to believers are all fulfilled through His Grace and Bounty.

Despite doing righteous good deeds, servants are not worthy of compensation since it is their obligation as servants to serve their Lord. However, the blessed Verse in question is saying that those who believe and do righteous good deeds will be granted permanent and endless rewards non–gratia.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 9

قُلْ أَإِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أَنْدَاداً ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

9. Say: “Do you verily disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two days? And you set up rivals [***in worship***] ***with Him? That is the Lord of the worlds.***

By the creation of the earth in two days, two stages are being intended. Prior to the creation of the earth and the heaven and the emergence of night, day, month, and year, there existed no day so that we say God Almighty created the earth in two days.

Divine Omnipotence accompanies His Omniscience and although God Almighty may create the heavens

and the earth and whatever exists between them at one time and the recurrent clauses:

"Be! And it was"

indicate the same, but He created the heavens and the earth in several stages which bears testimony to the fact that exercising power requires consideration and expediency and creation was expediently carried out in several stages.

The blessed Verse in question is a reproach to mankind in the form of a rhetorical question addressed to the Messenger of God (S) saying:

O Muhammad (S) say unto these disbelievers:

"Do you disbelieve and deny God Almighty Who created the earth in two days and set up rivals in worship for him? God Almighty Who created the earth in two days is the Lord of all the worlds. He is Omnipotent over the creation of the earth. He is the Creator of all creatures, since the heaven, the earth, and all the world of existence are inseparable from each other.

'Had there been gods beside God Almighty in them, they would have gone on the way to perdition.'"

Unity of the world bears testimony to Divine Unity since it is evident that all creatures are inseparable from each other like the rings of a chain.

Unity in creation indicates the Oneness of Creator since two causes may not affect one effect, hence the blessed Verse thus closes:

"That is the Lord of the worlds."

The Verse indicates that material beings come into being in time and the One Who created the earth also created all the worlds of existence.

The phrase:

"two days"

apparently demonstrates that had there been day and night, it would have taken two days, since there were neither days nor nights at the time so that creation could be restricted.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 10-11

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِلسَّائِلِينَ

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعاً أَوْ كَرْهاً قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ

10. He placed therein firm mountains from above it, and He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance in four days sufficient for all those in need.
11. Then He rose over towards the heaven when it was smoke and said unto it and unto the earth "Come both of you willingly or unwillingly [***and take shape***]***." They both said: "We come willingly*** [***took shape***]***."***

The Arabic word rawasi is the plural form of rasiya designating firm mountains. Sawa' indicates equal and the phrase sawa'an li-sa'ilin signifies that abilities are proportionate to needs. Taw'an and karhan are used in the senses of willingly and unwillingly respectively.

The verbal form istawa used with the preposition 'ala literally indicates dominion (as in:

"The Most Gracious [***Allah***] ***rose over towards the heaven,***9"***);***

however juxtaposed with the preposition ila it designates intention (as in the blessed Verse in question). 10

The earth and mountains are Divine Blessings including provision of sustenance, growth of plants, refinement of polluted water into pure water; sowing seeds and harvesting abundantly; excavation of mines; preservation of snow; provision of rocks for building; checking earthquakes, storms, and winds; serving as beacons for travelers.

It is worthy of note that mountains serve as the anchor of the earth since some of their roots lie in water so that waves may not destroy the earth.

The blessed Verse 10 says:

"And He blessed it, and measured therein its sustenance,"

that is, all types of corns, vegetables, and fruits are produced for mankind and animals.

The phrase:

"in four days"

includes the aforesaid two days. In other words, the creation of the earth, mountains, and plants took four days.

Taking the two days for the creation of the heavens mentioned in the following Verse, it could be said that the creation of the earth and heavens and the creatures between them took six days, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an11:

“Indeed your Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days.”

The phrase:

“sufficient for all those in need”

indicates that creation is well-measured according to Divine Omniscience which is free from immoderation, vanity, and defect.

Verse 11 says:

“Then He rose over towards the heaven,”

that is, He set order in heavenly bodies, some of which are far larger than the earth in size such that a specific place was apportioned for each of them and they may not exceed their bounds and veer off their orbits as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an[12]:

“It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit.”

The clause:

“it was smoke”

indicates that owing to distance from the earth, it seemed like smoke, in the same manner that the air and sea water seems to be blue from afar.

The blessed Verse 11 closes by saying that following the creation of the heaven and the earth in due measure, it was said unto them by the Glorious Creator that they had to obey Divine Commands willingly or unwillingly.

The blessed Verse in question explicitly indicates that the heaven, the earth, and all creatures are intelligent and it is a consequence of their intelligence that they are addressed by God.

The Verse confirms the views held by Philosophers and theologians who maintain that depending on their degrees of power and weakness, all creatures are intelligent. The Command may also be taken as existential rather than legislative making a reference to Divine Omnipotence through Which existent beings come into being.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 12

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَحِفْظاً ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

12. Then He completed and finished [*it was in the form of smoke*] ***from their creation seven heavens in two days and He made in each heaven its affair. And We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps to be an adornment as well as to guard*** [***heavens***]. ***Such is the Decree of Him, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient.***

Although God Almighty was Able to create everything at a single instance, but it was because of His Omniscience that He created the heavens in two stages. In terms of Divine Omnipotence, there is no difference between the Creation of the earth or that of the seven heavens as He created them in two stages.

Whatever lies within our knowledge concerning celestial bodies and whatever which will be discovered later on are adornments of the lower heaven:

"We adorned the nearest heaven with lamps to be an adornment."

The blessed Verse in question is saying that Divine Decree was acted upon throughout the seven heavens in two days and the Decree of each heaven was Divinely revealed unto it. It is a reference to the fact that each heaven is inclined by nature to act upon its existential Command as per Divine Omniscience and the order of the world.

The Arabic word ***sama'*** deriving from sammu designates "high" and it is applied to the atmosphere encompassing celestial bodies. The lights of the heaven are the sun, moon, and all the stars and planets.

They are likened to lights owing to their brilliance and giving off light onto the earth day and night.

Specification of lights to the sky of the world indicates that all the planets and stars visible in the sky are those belonging to the sky of our own world which is lower than all the planets since the word:

dunya (***"world"***)

derives from dunuw ("proximity") above which lie other heavens whose number is solely known by God Almighty as their innumerability is attested in a number of traditions.

It is narrated from Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as) in al-Khisal that the noble Imam said:

"To God Almighty belong twelve thousand worlds each of which is greater than the seven heavens and the seven earths none of which is sentient of other worlds."

Many other traditions indicate that the world is not limited to the seven heavens and the seven earths.

Surah Fussilat – Verses 13 – 14

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صَاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صَاعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَثَمُودَ

إِذْ جَاءَتْهُمُ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ قَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً فَإِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

13. But if they turn away, then say: "I have warned you of a destructive awful cry like that which overtook 'Ad and Thamud."
14. When the Messengers came to them from before them and behind them [saying]: "Worship none but Allah," they said: "If our Lord had so willed, He would surely have sent down the angels. So indeed we disbelieve in that with which you have been sent."

Prophets were divinely appointed to bear glad tidings and warnings unto mankind. These guides are supposed to prognosticate deviations and errors and find solutions to them.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verses in question warn disbelievers and address the Messenger of God (S) that O Muhammad say unto them that if they turn away from Divine Command, you will be cast into perdition through startling torment resembling lightning in the same manner that the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud were afflicted with destructive gale (sarsar) and awful cry respectively and they were both destroyed.

Verse 14 is saying that the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud committed sins since they denied the Calls of the divinely appointed Prophets saying that had our Lord willed to send Messengers to us, He would have made angels descend from the heaven, but you are like us and we will never acknowledge your Prophetic mission.

They were too ignorant to comprehend that angels are different from mankind by nature and they may neither associate with nor guide them, unless they take the form of human beings; however, in such case they would be regarded as human beings.

The motif is elsewhere attested in the Holy Qur'an[13]:

"And had We appointed him an angel, We truly would made him a man and We would have certainly disguised them in human form."

Surah Fussilat – Verse 15

فَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً

وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ

***15. As for ‘Ad, they were arrogant in the land without right and they said: “Who is mightier than us in strength?” See they not that Allah Who created them is mightier in strength than them. And they used to deny Our Ayat** [**Signs and Verses**].*

The people of ‘Ad inhabited the South of the Arabian Peninsula. They were mighty warriors who had constructed fortified castles and lofty buildings and all these had led to their arrogance and vanity.

What leads to disbelievers’ perdition is their persistence in their disbelief and obduracy. The blessed Verse is saying that the people of ‘Ad were destroyed by gale owing to their sin of being arrogant in the land without right. They regarded themselves to be superior in strength assuming that no one may vanquish them.

Consequently, they asked others as to the existence of any people superior to them in terms of strength and power.

When arrogance stemming from the bestial faculty vanquishes man, he consigns to oblivion his essential non-existence and contingent needs and takes pride in himself assuming that his glory and power is permanent, but he disregards the truth that God Almighty is All-Superior in His Omnipotence against Whose Boundless Power, all other powers are nothing in comparison.

The rhetorical question aims to reveal that all these people who deny Prophetic Calls disregard the fact that the Creator who has brought them from non-existence into existence is far superior to them in terms of power.

How could they deny His Signs of Omnipotence? It is needless to say that taking a glance at one’s creation and the frailties of man from his embryonic stage onwards may remove arrogance and vanity.

***“See they not that Allah Who created them is mightier in strength than them. And they used to deny Our Ayat** [**Signs and Verses**].”*

Surah Fussilat - Verse 16

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحاً صَرْصَراً فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحِسَاتٍ لِنُذِيقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَلَعَذَابُ الآخِرَةِ أَخْزَى وَهُمْ لا يُنْصَرُونَ

16. So We sent upon them a furious and poisonous gale in days of evil omen that We might give them a taste of disgracing torment in this present worldly life. But surely the torment of the Hereafter will be more disgracing and they will never be helped.

Another reference is made to the people of ‘Ad elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an[14]:

“And as for ‘Ad, they were destroyed by a furious violent gale! Which Allah inflicted upon them for seven nights and eight days successively, so that you could see men lying overthrown as if they were hollow trunks of date-palms!”

Divine Wrath may destroy some people in an instant, though their perdition may take a number of days and nights. It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question is saying that incompetent people with small capacities take pride in their limited power and rise in rebellion.

They may even rise against Divine Omnipotence out of ignorance. God Almighty may easily turn their opportunities into means of their perdition, as it is reflected in the story of the people of ‘Ad in the blessed Verse in question:

“So We sent upon them a furious and poisonous gale in days of evil omen that We might give them a taste of disgracing torment in this present worldly life.”

The strange gale levitated them from the ground and knocked them down as it is attested elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

“Indeed, We sent against them a furious gale of harsh noise on a day of evil omen and continuous calamity. Plucking out men as if they were uprooted stems of date-palms”[15]; “And as for ‘Ad, they were destroyed by a furious violent gale! Which Allah inflicted upon them for seven nights and eight days successively, so that you could not see men lying overthrown, as if they were hollow trunks of date-palms! Do you see any remnants of them?”[16].

This violent gale blew for seven nights and eight days and all the possessions of the wrong doing and arrogant people were being knocked and there remained solely ruins of their glorious palaces, abundant possessions, and luxurious life.

The blessed Verse in question closes by saying that:

“disgracing torment in this present worldly life. But surely the torment of the Hereafter will be more disgracing.”

All these excruciating torments in this worldly life resemble a spark against a sea of fire! What is worse than that is that:

“they will never be helped.”

Such wrong doing and arrogant people tried for a life time to show their glory, but at the time of torment, God Almighty inflicted a disgracing chastisement upon them in this world and another humiliating punishment will be in store for them in the Hereafter such that such vain arrogant people comprehend

their humility.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 17 - 18

وَأَمَّا ثَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَى عَلَى الْهُدَى فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ صَاعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ

17. And as for Thamud, We showed and made clear unto them the Path of Truth, but they preferred blindness to guidance. Therefore, a destructive cry of disgracing torment seized them because of what they used to earn.
18. And We saved those [*from 'Ad and Thamud*] ***who believed and used to fear Allah, keep their duty to Him, and avoid evil.***

The Prophet of the people of Thamud was Salih (Salah). They lived in Umm al-Qura ("the Mother of Cities) located between Medina and Sham, and possessed great strength and agricultural means and opportunities.

Their perdition was caused by lightning and earthquake as reflected in Qur'anic Verses, though both afflictions might have led to their destruction. Verse 17 is saying that God Almighty provided them with means of guidance, but they denied it.

It is worthy of note that Divine Guidance was available to all disbelievers and polytheists and it was not restricted to the people of Thamud. The blessed Verses apparently allude to the Salih's she-camel that came out of rock with her calf.

She provided them with sufficient milk and it was a miracle to guide them; however they preferred blindness over guidance and cut the sinews of her feet and killed her calf which led to the warning against their perdition.

"Therefore, a destructive cry of disgracing torment seized them."

The blessed Verse makes a reference to the destructive cry expressed as lightning. The destructive cry was so harsh that it deafened their ears and they were all destroyed instantly.

The clause:

"because of what they used to earn"

refers to severing the sinews of the she-camel's feet and killing her calf. It is reported that three members of Ahl al-Bayt (Prophetic family, AS) made references to Salih's she-camel:

firstly, Sadiqa Tahira saying:

“Salih’s she-camel and her calf were not superior to me before God Almighty in terms of excellence,”

al-Husayn (as) when Radih (the suckling infant) was killed said:

“O Lord! This infant before you is not inferior to the calf of Salih’s she-camel,”

Imam Hadi (as), accompanying Mutawakkil to the latter’s palace said:

“My index finger is superior to Salih’s she-camel.”

Mutawakkil did not live longer than three days and his body was cut into pieces.

Verse 18 says:

“And We saved those** [**from ‘Ad and Thamud**] **who believed and used to fear Allah, keep their duty to Him, and avoid evil.”

Many Qur’anic Verses and traditions indicate that so long as believers and the God fearing live among disbelievers and the corrupt, Divine torment will not be sent to them and they should fear that if religious scholars, the pious, and the God fearing leave them, such torments will be inflicted upon them.

Surah Fussilat - Verses 19 - 20

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُ أَعْدَاءُ اللَّهِ إِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ

حَتَّى إِذَا مَا جَاءُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

19. And** [**remember**] **the Day that the enemies of Allah will be gathered to the Fire, then they will be restrained.
20. Till when they reach it, their hearing and their eyes and their skins will bear witness against them as to what they used to do.

The Arabic verbal form ***yuza’un*** is used in the sense of “they are restrained,” connoting that the first one is restrained to the coming of the last one following which they shall be driven to Hell. Representation of Resurrection leads to warning and guidance.

The Holy Qur’an asks the Noble Prophet (S) to remind people of such Day.

The blessed Verse 19 is saying that God Almighty makes mention of disbelievers and the manner of their advent of the Day of Resurrection reminding His Messenger (S) that upon their arrival, God’s

enemies will be gathered such that those occupying the front row shall be restrained so that others may arrive and they all enter Hell.

Upon their assembly, their bodily organs, through Divine Command, bear witness against them: their ears bear testimony that they disregarded both the Signs of existence which were recurrently heard by them and the Qur'anic Verses heard by them.

They did not take any lessons but neglected them. Their skins bear witness that they touched unlawful objects. It is worthy of note that there is a vital force within bodily organs and everything shall attain to perfection on the Day of Resurrection.

Upon the arrival of human body from the mundane world to the Hereafter, all inward deeds and conducts shall be manifest through Divine Command and it may justify the secret of the manner of bearing testimony by bodily organs against man.

Verse 20 is saying that their ears bear witness to hearing the Call to proceed toward Truth but they turned away from it. Their eyes bear witness that they saw many a Signs indicating Divine Unity, but they failed to believe. Other bodily organs bear witness against their deeds and sins.

It is mentioned in 'Ali ibn Ibrahim Qumi's Tafsir[17] that the Verse is concerned with those whose deeds become manifest to them, but they deny them, saying:

"We are not aware of such deeds in the least."

Then, the angels in charge of recording their deeds bear witness that they have committed such acts.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"They say unto God Almighty

'O Lord! They are your angels and bear witness to your benefit.'

They take an oath that they have not committed any of such deeds."

Thus, God Almighty places the seal of silence on their tongues and makes their bodily organs speak– any ear, eye, hand, and foot, having heard, seen, touched, and proceeded toward unlawful words, sights, objects, directions bear testimony before God Almighty.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 21

وَقَالُوا لِجُلُودِهِمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا قَالُوا أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

21. And they will say to their skins, "Why did you testify against us?" They will say: "Allah has

caused us to speak, He causes all things to speak and He created you the first time and to Him you are made to return."

There will be numerous witnesses on the Day of Resurrection, including God Almighty, Prophets, the earth, time, angels, and bodily organs.

Bearing witness by bodily organs indicates their knowledge as to human deeds. It is worthy of note that the One Who is Omnipotent and creates creatures is also Able to make them speak as well. The blessed Verse in question treats of bodily organs' response to man's objection to his skins bearing witness against him, saying:

"Allah has caused us to speak, He causes all things to speak."

It is worthy of note that the word:

"thing" (***shay'***)

is used in the general sense of the word which indicates that all the constituent elements of the world shall speak, which may in turn designate disclosure of their inner secrets, since nothing shall be concealed at that time and everything shall manifest its truth and inner secrets.

The One Who makes everything speak is the One Who created you in the first place and you shall return unto Him.

Surah Fussilat – Verses 22 – 23

وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَتِرُونَ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلا أَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلا جُلُودُكُمْ وَلَكِنْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيراً مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

وَذَلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِي ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ أَرْدَاكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

22. And [***suppose that***] ***you have not been hiding yourselves lest your ears and your eyes and your skins should testify against you, but you thought that Allah knew not much of what you were doing.***
23. And that thought of yours which you thought about your Lord, has brought you to destruction; and you have become of those utterly lost.

Bearing witness to deeds committed in this world by bodily organs is indubitable, though sinners neglect the same. Belief in the fact that we are in the presence of God Almighty is the most significant factor leading to human growth and guidance.

We may invoke God Almighty to render us succor so that through logical reasoning we may make our

beliefs firm and transparent and thereby avoid suspicion as to Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse raises an objection against disbelievers that they may not conceal anything since your bodily organs like ears, eyes, and skins bear witness against you on the Day of Resurrection. Furthermore, God Almighty is Omniscient and Omnipotent and such groundless suspicions against God led to their perdition and they have become utter losers.

Qur'anic exegets narrate on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas concerning the occasion of revelation of the Verses in question as saying:

"One day I had covered my face in the Ka'ba covering when three persons approached – Safwan from Rabi'a, Umayya, and 'Abd Allah Thaqafi.

One of them said:

'May God hear what we say?'

Another one replied:

'If we speak loudly, He will hear us.'

The other said:

'If He hears our loud speech, he may hear our whisper.'

I went to the Noble Prophet (S) and quoted their words. Then, the Verse was revealed to remove such baseless suspicions."[18]

Finally, mention will be made of fair thought toward God Almighty and suspicion against Him.

The above Verses clearly indicates that suspicion against God Almighty is so perilous that it may lead to perdition and everlasting torment, instances of which include a group of disbelievers who imagined that God Almighty may neither see their deeds nor may He hear their words and such suspicion caused their utter loss and perdition. Au contraire, entertaining fair thought about God Almighty leads to deliverance in this world and the Hereafter.

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"Entertaining good thought about God is the best of devotions."[19]

As per another Prophetic tradition:

"Make attempts to entertain fair thought about God, since it is the cost of Paradise."[20]

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*“Entertaining fair thought about God is that you do not set your hopes on anyone else and be solely afraid of your sin.”*21

Musa ibn Ja’far, Imam Kasim (as), said:

*“The Good of this world and the Hereafter is solely due to believers’ good thought about God and causes them to set their hopes on Him.”*22

There are many other traditions for which one may consult the related sources.

Mention will hereunder be made of witnesses at the Tribunal to be held on the Day of Resurrection. When we say all human beings shall stand the Tribunal in the Hereafter, it may remind one of the tribunals held in this world at which each person produces documents and/or witnesses before judges and following questions and answers the final verdict is issued.

However, it has been mentioned many a time that words designate broader and deeper meanings there which at times may defy the understanding of the prisoners of this world and at times it may be impossible to grasp at all.

It is worthy of note that taking into account the Qur’anic allusions and the traditions narrated from the Infallible Imams, we may discover truths which to some extent, uncover the grandeur and profundity of the world to come and demonstrate that the Tribunal to be held on the Day of Resurrection shall be quite extraordinary.

For instance, when it is said:

“scales of deeds”

one may assume that our deeds will turn into light and heavy objects weighed on a balance. According to traditions narrated from the Infallible Imams (as), ‘Ali (as) is the standard for assaying deeds.

In other words, human deeds and characters will be compared with those of this eminent man in the world of humanity. The more one resembles him, the heavier one weights on the balance.

Qur’anic Verses reveal truths concerning the question of testimonies and treat of issues which are not issues at the courts of law in this world but they play significant roles at the Tribunals in the Hereafter. Generally speaking, there are six types of witnesses for the Tribunal.

The Most Sublime in rank is Divine Pure Essence:

“Neither you [O Muhammad!] do any deed nor recite any portion of the Qur’an, nor you do any deed but We are Witness thereof”23.

It is worthy of note that the same testimony is sufficient for anyone and anything, but Divine Grace and

Justice necessitate the presence of other witnesses as well.

The Prophet (S) and the trustees:

"How then, when We bring from each nation a witness and We bring you [***O Muhammad***] ***as a witness against these people?"***[24].

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) regarding the Verse in issue quoted in Kafi

"It is revealed about Muhammad's nation that there will be witnesses for them from amongst us in each and every century and Muhammad (S) is a witness to all of us."[25]

Bodily organs, e.g. tongue, hands, feet, eyes, and ears

"On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their legs [***or feet***] ***will bear witness against them as to what they used to do"***[26].

The blessed Verses in question indicate that eyes and ears bear witness in the hereafter and a number of traditions designate that all bodily organs in their turn bear witness to their acts.[27]

Skins also bear witness in the Hereafter.

The blessed Verses in question explicitly treat of the issue and further add that sinners will never expect their skins to bear testimony against them, as they address their skins saying:

"Why do you bear testimony against us?"

They reply:

"God Almighty Who makes everything speak has made us speak too."

Angels will be witnesses then, as reflected in the Holy Qur'an:

"And every person will come forth [***on that Day***] ***along with an angel to drive him toward Reckoning and angels bear witness to his deeds"***[28].

The earth that is beneath our feet and we are always its guest enjoying its blessings closely keeps an eye on us.

On that Day, it will bear testimony to all our deeds, as it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an:

"That Day it will declare its information [***about all that happened over it of good or evil***]***"***[29].

Time is also among the witnesses, though it is not reflected in the Holy Qur'an, but traditions narrated from the Infallibles (as) bear witness to the same, as it is narrated from Imam 'Ali (as):

“No day passes for the son of Adam unless it tells him:

*‘O son of Adam! I am a new day witnessing to your deeds, say good words and do righteous good deeds in me so that I bear witness to your good words and deeds on the Day of Resurrection.’”*30

It is actually a source of wonder that so many truthful witnesses of that great Tribunal, from space and time to angels, bodily organs, Prophets, saints, and above all, Divine Pure Essence, closely watch our deeds and we are unaware of the same. Belief in the existence of such watching witnesses should suffice to make man tread the Path of Truth, Justice, Purity, and fearing God.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 24

فَإِنْ يَصْبِرُوا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوىً لَهُمْ وَإِنْ يَسْتَعْتِبُوا فَمَا هُمْ مِنَ الْمُعْتَبِينَ

24. Then if they bear the torment patiently,** [**it will be of no avail, since**] **the Fire is the home for them, and if they seek Divine Forgiveness, yet they are not of those who will ever be forgiven by Allah.

Neither patience nor crying shall be of no avail to disbelievers in Hell, since repentance and asking for Divine Forgiveness may solely help man in this world. The Arabic word mathwan indicates permanent residence and the verbal form yasta’tibu deriving from isti’ab designates request forgiveness.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that Hellfire shall be disbelievers’ home whether they endure the pain or no and it shall be of no point to ask for Divine Forgiveness then since it shall be of no avail.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 25

وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَاءَ فَزَيَّنُوا لَهُمْ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ

25. And we have assigned for them companions who have made fair-seeming to them, what was before them and what was behind them** [**i.e., their evil deeds**]. **And the Word** [**Divine Command of torment**] **is justified against them as it was justified against those who were among the previous generations of jinn and men that had passed away before them. Indeed they were the losers.

Addled friends adversely influence human mind and character, since they take advantage of instincts and natural desires. Man loves good and beauty by dispositions and seducers take advantage of the same to make vicious acts seem fair so that their victims facilely accept them; as a consequence of which, man regards his past sins as fair and thereby refrains from repentance.

To sum up, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to disbelievers' misfortune, evil fate, humility and the fact that they have lost the sacred spirit and the Divine faculty vested in human disposition.

Their heart was supposed to embrace angels instead devils frequent it. Consequently, friends and companions from amongst devils and evil jinn and men are assigned to them as their intimate companions encompassing them from all sides making their vicious deeds seem fair to them.

Thus Divine Command of torment is justified against them as it was justified against the peoples of the past. Those who follow Satan and their vain desires shall be losers who have lost their life and shall reap nothing but regret and grief.

The verbal form qayyadna derives from qayd designating egg shell since the vicious and corrupt people who vanquish man encompass him like egg shell, robbing them of their thought and distinction such that evils deeds seem fair to them.

How painful is such state for man leading him to the abyss of corruption impeding him from finding deliverance. The Arabic root q-y-d is at times employed in the sense of metamorphosing, namely changing something into something else.

Thus, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse would be:

"We take righteous friends them from them and instead give them addled friends."

Surah Fussilat - Verses 26 - 28

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُونَ

فَلَنُذِيقَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَذَاباً شَدِيداً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ أَعْدَاءِ اللَّهِ النَّارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ

26. And those who disbelieve say: "Listen not to this Qur'an, and make noise in the midst of its [recitation] that you may overcome."
27. But surely, We shall cause those who disbelieve to taste a severe torment and certainly, We shall requite them the worst of what they used to do.
28. That is the recompense of the enemies of Allah: the Fire. Therein will be for them the eternal home, a recompense for that they used to deny Our Ayat [Signs, Verses].

Propaganda against religion has existed at all times. Those whose words do not stand to reason, hinder people from listening to the logical words uttered by others. The clause ***wa alghu fihi*** indicates “they endeavor to make deviation in the True Path through vain acts, e.g. whistling, clapping, making noise, telling tales, creating suspicions, and raising irrelevant questions.”

It is narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas concerning the occasion of Revelation of blessed Verse 26 that the chiefs of disbelievers failed at imitating Qur’anic Verses and were afraid that Arabs from different regions depart for Mecca and believe in the Prophetic Call.

Following consultations they decided to distract the Prophet (S) and his audience while he was reciting the Holy Qur’an. Serving this purpose, they gathered at his reciting the Qur’anic Verses and sang songs, uttered vain words, whistled, and clapped their hands so as to impede the audience from listening to the Noble Prophet (S).

It is in this vein that the blessed Verse says:

“And those who disbelieve say: “Listen not to this Qur’an, and make noise in the midst of its [***recitation***] ***that you may overcome.”***

Enemies of religion imagined that they could extinguish Divine Light, but they were unaware that Divine Light may not be put out.

Verse 27 is saying that disbelievers resorted to such inappropriate and inhumane act imagining that they could succeed in their evil ways, but were unaware that they would fail and thereby pave the way for their perdition since it is emphatically stated that they shall taste excruciating torments and chastisements for their vicious deeds.

Verse 28 makes a reference to the previous Verse saying that the torment shall be very painful and enemies of God shall be chastised by Hellfire therein shall be their everlasting abode as a recompense for their denial of Divine Revelations.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 29

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّنَا أَرِنَا الَّذَيْنِ أَضَلَّانَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ نَجْعَلْهُمَا تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِنَا لِيَكُونَا مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِينَ

29. And those who disbelieve will say: “Our Lord! Show us those among jinn and men who led us astray: that we may crush them under our feet so that they become the lowest.”

Disbelievers wish to know those who led them to error so that they may take their vengeance upon them. Those who led people in this world were highly respected to those in error but the latter wish to denigrate the former in the Hereafter.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that when disbelievers find themselves in the shadows of Abyss and the blazing Hellfire lose their hope of deliverance and utter such words out of desperateness wishing to find those who led them to such unfortunate state and take their vengeance upon them for having them misled and crush them and send them to the lowest level of Hell.

They will apparently say that those who were their chiefs and leaders seduced them and they wish that they be crushed by them so that they may be happy to take their vengeance upon them.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 30

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ

30. Indeed, those who say: "Our Lord is Allah," and then they stand firm, on them the angels will descend** [**at the time of their death, saying**]**: "Fear not, nor grieve! But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!

Perseverance fosters faith and large were in number the believers who had an evil fate, since perseverance is supposed to accompany faith, otherwise, disbelievers stand firm on their false belief. The most exalted blessing given to believers by angels is serenity and peace of mind.

Following a depiction of disbelievers' torments and unfortunate state as the consequences of their vicious deeds, the blessed Verse in question depicts the merits of the God fearing believers saying that they said that God Almighty is the Lord and Fosterer.

They stood firm on their beliefs and obligations. Angels welcome them upon their death and on the Day of Resurrection making them feel secure and confident without entertaining any fear or grief, when disbelievers are scared by witnessing the awe inspiring scenes of that Day, since God Almighty promised God fearing believers that they would be secure and angels bear them glad tidings of the Paradise promised by God Almighty to believers.

The comprehensive and interesting expression actually encompasses all goods and excellent characteristics: love of God and firm belief in Him in the first place and then act upon such belief in all spheres of life. Many a people claim His love, but they lack perseverance owing to their weakness and frailty.

Upon facing with the tempests of passions and lusts, they bid farewell to belief and turn into polytheists. When they find out that their interests are in jeopardy, they lose their weak and frail belief of theirs.

In one of the sermons of Nahj al-Balagha, Imam 'Ali (as) provides a clear and meaningful interpretation of the Verse, saying:

"You said that our Lord is Allah. Now stand firm on your word and persevere in acting upon His Commands, treading His Path, and praising Him as it is worthy of Him. Do not disobey Him, nor make innovations in His Religions, nor deny His Prophet's Call."

According to a Prophetic tradition, following the recitation of the blessed Verse, the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"Some uttered such words, but the majority of them disbelieved. However, one who utters such word and perseveres in acting upon it to his last day will be regarded among those who stand firm on their beliefs."[31]

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Rada (as) that in reply to a question raised concerning the interpretation of perseverance, he said:

"It is Divine Guardianship that is available to you."[32]

Such interpretation does not mean that the general context of the Verse in question solely refers to Divine Guardianship, but it aims to designate that acknowledgement of the guardianship of the Infallible Shi'i Imams (as) guarantees steadfastness in adhering to monotheism and doing righteous good deeds according to pure Islamic beliefs.

To sum up, it could be said that human value lies in keeping his faith and doing righteous good deeds as reflected in this Verse:

"'Our Lord is Allah,' and then they stand firm."

It is narrated that someone asked the Noble Prophet of Islam (S):

"Provide me with injunctions through acting upon them I may be among the saved in this world and the Hereafter."

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Say my Lord is Allah and stand firm on your word."

The man further inquired:

"What is the most perilous thing of which I should stand in fear?"

The Prophet (S) touched his tongue and said:

"This!"[33]

Surah Fussilat - Verses 31 - 32

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ

نُزُلاً مِنْ غَفُورٍ رَحِيمٍ

31. "We [***angels***] ***have been your friends in the life of this world and are*** [***so***] ***in the Hereafter. Therein*** [***paradise***] ***you shall have*** [***all***] ***that your inner selves desire, and therein you shall have*** [***all***] ***for which you ask.***
32. "An entertainment from [***Allah***]***, the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."***

Perseverant believers have friends amongst heavenly creatures and their material and spiritual demands shall be met in Paradise. The Arabic word nuzl designates foods and drinks served to guests.

The blessed Verse is saying that addressing believers, angels say that they were their friends in the world and the Hereafter.

Imam Muhammad Baqir (as) is narrated as saying that angels say unto believers that they protected them from afflictions and hardships and upon death they protect them against satanic temptations. It will be in the Hereafter that they will protect them from the severity of chastisement and will accompany them unto Paradise.

Interpreting the Quranic Verse:

"Indeed, those who say: 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then they stand firm,"

a number of mystics maintain that they said that their Lord had been Allah following which they persevered in keeping their faith and abstained from turning away from Him, as a consequence of which angels descend upon them willingly saying unto them.

"Do not entertain fear of being reproached nor grieve for transience since we bear glad tidings to you for your admission into the everlasting abode in Paradise.

There shall be no fear in the everlasting abode since the persevering believers are not supposed to be afraid of anything are they supposed to entertain grief and sorrow. There will be all kinds of blessings for you. We bear glad tidings to you for all blessings."

(***"Stand firm. Do not grieve. Grasp the Divine Cord. There are glad tidings for you for your admission into Paradise that is the abode of satisfaction."***). [34]

Angels are the friends of God's friends and the enemies of God's enemies in this world and the

Hereafter. All creatures are the Most Gracious Allah's Host protecting God's friends and they are enemies of God's enemies and whenever they are permitted by God Almighty, they bring ruin to disbelievers.

Verse 32 says:

"An entertainment from [***Allah***]***, the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."***

In his Mufradat, Raghib says that the Arabic word nuzl designates what is served to guests following their arrival.

The blessed Verse in question may make a reference to the blessings of the people of Paradise as promised by angels when they said unto believers that they were their friends, protectors, and guardians in this world and they will accompany them upon their hardships in the Hereafter and will take them to Paradise which is the abode of Divine Blessing wherein is prepared what you desire by your Lord Who is the Oft-Forgiving of sins and is the Most Gracious and the Most Compassionate.

The author of the Tafsir ["Exegesis] titled Atyab al-Bayan says:

"Nuzlan designates the glad tidings to be borne by angels upon death encompassing all this worldly and otherworldly blessings from the moment of death to entering Paradise and the phrase:

min ghafurin [***"from the Oft-Forgiving"***]

indicates the first glad tidings upon death which is forgiving of their sins. God Almighty is Rahim [*"All-Compassionate"*] *such that He will bestow all Bounties upon them."*

Now let us consider the Blessings bestowed by God Almighty upon those people who revive the two significant principles of monotheism and perseverance.

Man attains to a station in which angels descend upon him through his belief and perseverance and proclaim unto him the Divine Message which abounds in Divine Mercy and Favor. The first and the second glad tidings pertain to the aforesaid lack of fear and grief.

They are followed by the third glad tiding:

"Receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!"

The fourth glad tiding is:

""We [***angels***] ***have been your friends in the life of this world and are*** [***so***] ***in the Hereafter."***

The fifth glad tiding is:

"Therein [***paradise***] ***you shall have*** [***all***] ***that your inner selves desire."***

The sixth one is:

"And therein you shall have [***all***] ***for which you ask."***

The seventh and the last glad tiding borne to believers by angels is that you are God's guests abiding in His everlasting Paradise and all the Bounties and Blessings are offered to them as they are His cherished guests:

"An entertainment from [***Allah***]***, the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."***

Surah Fussilat - Verse 33

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلاً مِمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحاً وَقَالَ إِنَّنِي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

33. And who is better in speech than he who [***says: "My Lord is Allah" and then stands firm and***] ***invites*** [***men***] ***to Allah's and does righteous deeds and says: "I am one of the Muslims."***

Propagation of religion is the best of words and Divine Messengers are the best of speakers. The best of words is not the most scholarly and the most melodious rather it is the Call to people to embrace faith, one which is purposeful.

The blessed Verse in question praises those who act in three ways: firstly, they call people to God Almighty, guide them, and show unto them the path to happiness and Divine Guidance and show them the Straight Path of Divine Laws.

Such people are those who call people to embrace true faith. Their words and deeds are the best. Secondly, one calling people to embrace faith are supposed to do righteous good deeds so that his words impress the audience.

Those who call people to turn to Truth are supposed to base their words on their deeds otherwise their words will be of not be efficacious, since empty words go into one ear and out the other without impressing the audience.

Thirdly, it is incumbent upon those calling people to turn to Allah to say that he is a Muslim, i.e., totally submitted to Divine Commands, and he is calling his audience to submit to Divine Will and truly believe in God.

Their words are supposed to be substantiated by their deeds. It is worthy of note to consider two traditions:

1. Ibn Shahr Ashub narrates from Ibn 'Abbas who in turn narrates from the Messenger of God (S) that He said:

“After me, ‘Ali (as) will call and guide people to my Lord. He is the pious man among believers (salih al-mu’minin) and the clause:

“He is the best who invoked Allah and did righteous good deeds”

*is addressed to him.*35

2. According to ‘Ayyashi’s Tafsir [“Exegesis”], the blessed Verse in question was revealed concerning ‘Ali (as).36

Although a number of Qur’anic exegets maintain that such attributes belong to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the Noble Prophet (S) and the Shi’i Imams calling people to Truth, or Callers to daily prayers, but it is evident that the blessed Verse is applicable to all those calling people to monotheism; however, it is best applicable to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S).

Taking into account the Occasion of Revelation of the blessed Verse, it may be said that the Verse is applicable to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the Infallible Imams (as), and all scholars and those who struggle in the Path of Allah, those who command good and forbid evil and all the propagators of the Islamic faith from all walks of life.

The blessed Verse is a great glad tiding and an unequalled glory to those who may be encouraged by it.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 34

وَلا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ

34. The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel [the evil] with one which is better; then verily he between whom and you there was enmity [will become] as though he was a closed friend.

One way of calling people unto Allah is to erase tensions and do good in return for the evil acts committed by others.

One is not supposed to think that the passage of time consigns everything to oblivion. Positive and negative reactions are not on a par as they impress minds. It is worthy of note that indifferent and ill-mannered people confront those who call people unto Allah.

In this vein, the propagators of religion are supposed to face them with their good disposition and tolerance or else they may not succeed in their call.

The blessed Verse in question is advising callers to do good in return for the evil acts committed by other people and abstain from taking vengeance, as reflected in the prayer of Excellences of Disposition

(Makarim al-Akhlaq), in which Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (as) invokes Allah to bestow upon him the favor of saying good things about people in return for their slanders and backbiting, forgive them, and associate with those who turn away from him.

There are many an account in the biographies of the Noble Prophet (S) and the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt regarding such excellences of dispositions through which the strictest opponents turned into their adherents.

In other words, it is evident that good and evil are not on a par – wrong-doers and the just, believers and disbelievers, monotheists and polytheists, the knowledgeable and the ignorant, the generous and the close-fisted are not equal as the truthful and righteous people whose words are substantiated by their deeds are not equal with the lying and the ill-mannered man.

Thus, the Most Gracious Lord Whose Mercy encompasses all His creatures and servants commands the Messenger of His Mercy who represents His Graciousness and Mercifulness and calls Him a Mercy to the world:

"O Muhammad (S)! Turn evil and sin into something better and wrath into clemency and conceal sin with forgiveness or words and refute falsehood with truth."

In other words, God Almighty is saying unto His Noble Prophet (S) that no matter how disbelievers utter slanderous words against you and do wrong to you, you should return their evil words with clemency and speak unto them gently and kindly so that your enemies and foes may befriend you and turn to the Islamic faith.

It is mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[37]:

"And argue with them in a way that is better."

It was the Noble Prophet's (S) disposition to behave with his enemies and foes in a friendly manner and treated them kindly and gently and it is said that most of those who embraced the Islamic faith did so through his favorable disposition.

Thus it is said in the Holy Qur'an concerning his disposition:

"Indeed you the best in terms of good disposition."

A tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) concerning the blessed Verse in question in Tafsir Burhan according to which the Noble Imam (as) said:

"The good deed (hasana) is discretionary concealment of one's beliefs under duress (taqiya) and keeping secrets and the vicious deed (sayi'a) is disclosure of secrets."

Concerning the meaning of:

"Repel** [**the evil**] **with one which is better,"

the Noble Imam (as) said:

"Defend yourself through discretionary concealment of beliefs under duress which is the good deed."

It is said in the Tafsir Atyab al-Bayan under the blessed Verse in question that good and evil deeds are interpreted in many traditions as discretionary concealment of one's beliefs under duress and disclosure of secrets respectively, saying:

"It is a significant issue since the Noble Imams (as) hardships under Umayyad, Marwanid, and 'Abbasid tyrranous rules were caused by the statements uttered by some ignorant Shi'is who disclosed their secrets.

Had they concealed their beliefs out of discretion, they would not have suffered so many afflictions. Even today, one is at times supposed to conceal one's beliefs out of discretion."

Surah Fussilat - Verse 35

وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا ذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

35. But none is granted it** [**such good disposition**] **except those who are patient and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion** [**of excellences of dispositions**] **in this world.

It is only the patient who possess the great portion. Those who seek worldly gains regard Korah as the possessor of the great portion, but the Holy Qur'an says that it belongs to those who possess excellences of disposition.

The blessed Verse in question says that one may not possess such praiseworthy character which is the opposite of committing evil deeds unless he is patient and tolerant in hardships.

Only those who possess a great portion of wisdom, clemency, and knowledge may attain to the exalted station of the patient and those who do good in return for the evil deeds of others. Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that the great portion indicates Paradise and the exalted stations bestowed by God Almighty in the Hereafter.[38]

Surah Fussilat - Verse 36

وَإِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

36. And if an evil whisper from Satan tries to turn you away** [**from doing good in return for the evil deeds committed by others**]**, then seek refuge in Allah. Indeed, He is the All-Hearer, the Omniscient.

The Arabic word nazgh is used in the sense of incitement to evil and Satan's temptation and provocation. Incitement of vengeance is a satanic stratagem but doing good in return for the evil deeds committed by others is a Divine Injunction.

Satan often holds man in check when his irascible faculty is incited through some unfavorable state as a consequence of which he gets into a rage and many a time loses control of himself and may commit a sin.

Thus, God Almighty addresses the Noble Prophet (S) in the blessed Verse in question and says unto him that whenever Satan desires to incite some temptation in your heart and provoke you to do something, seek refuge in Allah, since He is All-Hearing to hear your invocation and is Omniscient and nothing is concealed from Him.

The blessed Verse in addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but it actually addresses the Muslim community, since Satan may not hold Prophets in check, let alone the Seal of the Prophets (S). Numerous Qur'anic Verses bear testimony to the point in question.

Mention is herein made of two traditions. According to a Prophetic tradition, someone slandered at someone else.

The latter got into a rage, but the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"I know a word that if the wrathful utter it, their wrath subsides:

'I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan.'"

The tradition is a reference to the fact that the tempest of wrath is one of the satanic temptations, in the same manner that the tempests of lusts and passions are among satanic temptations.[39]

It is mentioned in the book titled Khisal that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) taught his companions four hundred aphorisms regarding the issues which are to the benefit of Muslims in this world and the Hereafter, an instance of which is:

"Whenever one of you is tempted by Satan, he should seek refuge in God Almighty and say

'I believe in Allah and purify my faith for him.'"[40]

Surah Fussilat - Verse 37

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ

37. And from among His Signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Prostrate yourselves not to the sun nor to the moon, but prostrate yourselves to Allah Who created them, if you worship Him.

The night and the day are the Signs of Divine Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Mercy. Verse 32 terms the best word as a call toward Allah and the blessed Verse in question treats the Path to Call to Him.

The night and the day are Divine Signs indicating His Omnipotence: the serenity of night and its consecution with the day, their timing, decrease, and increase and their proportion to sleep and peace of mind.

The blessings of the day include growth of plants and animals, evaporation of waters which leads to formation of clouds, rain, fruit bearing of trees, saving of energy, genesis of motion, circling, and circulation and contribution of the earth in its revolving and motion, the distance of the sun from the earth, the atmosphere that controls the solar heat, the moon as the nightly light and the natural and common calendar for all, phases of the moon in their roles in the ebb and flow are all the Signs of Divine Omnipotence.

In other words, the blessed Verse in question is saying that consecutive nights and days are Signs of Divine Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Governance.

The sun and the moon are among His evident Signs each of which perform their functions in its own position as per the Ordainment of the Governor and Provider of the world and do not veer off its orbit.

The sun and the moon despite their grandeur and glory follow Divine Commands and their existence and survival depends upon Divine Will, but they are not worthy of being worshipped, since prostration and showing humility are worthy of the Lord Who brought them from non-existence into existence and ordained them for human existence and survival.

Polytheists imagine that prostrating before the sun and the moon would lead to their exalted station before God as a consequence of which they said:

“We solely worship them in order to be closer to Allah.”

God Almighty is saying unto them that if they wish to become closer to Truth and worship Him, they should not prostrate before them but they should prostrate before God Who is their Creator and

Provider.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 38

فَإِنِ اسْتَكْبَرُوا فَالَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لا يَسْأَمُونَ

38. But if they are too proud* [*to worship God Almighty, it matters not, since*] *there are those who are with your Lord* [*angels*] *glorify Him night and day, and never are they tired.

Turning away from prostration and worship are clear indications of arrogance.

The blessed Verse in question is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

"O Muhammad! If these polytheists turn away from prostrating before and worshipping Allah out of arrogance and enmity, diverse ranks of angels and heavenly creatures who are close to Allah glorify and worship their Lord night and day and they are never tired of glorification at all times."

Surah Fussilat – Verse 39

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنَّكَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

39. And among His Signs is that you see the earth barren, but when We send down water to it, it is stirred to life and growth. Indeed, He Who gives it life, surely is Able to give life to the dead. Indeed He is Able to do all things.

God Almighty works through natural means. It is a representative sample; He Who revives the barren earth is Able to raise the dead on the Day of Resurrection.

In blessed Verse in question, God Almighty addresses His Messenger (S) to show the veracity of Resurrection and raising of the dead on the Last Day so that His Prophet (S) reminds people to consider the Divine Signs and notice that the earth, withered and barren in winter is revived in spring when the rain renders the barren earth verdant and lush green.

One Who is Able to make the barren earth alive and verdant is also Able to resurrect the dead bodies through His Mercy, since He is Omnipotent.

The motif of raising the dead on the Day of Resurrection and its similitude to the rejuvenation of the earth in springtime following its withering away in winter season is to attested in numerous Qur'anic Verses.

Since there should exist a point of similarity between tenor and vehicle in eloquent speech, without which similes lose their effectiveness, one may infer from the Verse that as the potentiality and actuality of the earth exists in winter season though the growth of plants stay stagnant, in like manner, man does not become non-existent following death but the external indications of his existence are not evident and he will be raised on the Day of Resurrection which is the springtime of his actuality through Divine Command and whatever stays dormant in his mind shall become evident.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 40

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا أَفَمَنْ يُلْقَى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ أَمَّنْ يَأْتِي آمِناً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

40. Indeed, those who turn away from Our Ayat** [**Signs, Verses**] **are not hidden from Us. Is he who is cast into the Fire better or he who comes secure on the Day of Resurrection? Do what you will. Verily He is All-Seer of what you do.

The Arabic word

ilhad (***"apostasy"***)

is cognate with lahad ("hole deviating toward one side") and mulhid ("apostate").

God provides man with respite but He is All-Aware of deviations. He grants respite to those in error so that they may repent. The people of Paradise proceed toward their everlasting abode in peace and glory but the people of Hell will be cast into Hell.

Upon hearing the Holy Qur'an, disbelievers attempted at distracting the audience through making noise and clapping their hands. The blessed Verse in question is saying that evil doers should know that God Almighty is All-Aware of their vicious deeds and it is such deeds that will lead them to Hell.

The hamza in the initial position of 'a-fa-man indicates a rhetorical question connoting guidance for disbelievers reminding them of the necessity of intellection and reflection upon the evil consequences of their deeds in Hell.

The blessed Verse poses this question:

"Is he who is cast into the Fire better or he who come secure on the Day of Resurrection"

without fear?

It stands to reason that the two are no on a par.

It is worthy of note that:

"Do what you will"

is addressed to those who uttered false words regarding the Holy Qur'an. The blessed Verse is saying that they are granted respite to do what they will; however, they should know that God Almighty is All-Aware of what they do and He will provide them with the recompense of what they do in this world.

1. Majma' al-Bayan, the opening of the Chapter in question.
2. Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani, under the Chapter in question.
3. Raghib's Mufradat.
4. the preceding Verse
5. 3:97
6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 77, p. 58.
7. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 96, p. 29.
8. Mizan al-Hikma, s.v. Zakat.
9. Chapter 20
10. Raghib's Mufradat.
11. 7:54
12. 36:49
13. 6:9
14. 69:6-7
15. 54:19-20
16. 69:6-8
17. vol. 2, p.264
18. Tafsir Qurtubi, Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, Fakhr Razi's Tafsir, Ruh al-Bayan, Maraghi's Tafsir, Bukhari's and Muslim's Sahih, and Tirmidhi.
19. Madinat al-Balagha, vol. 2, p. 450.
20. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 109.
21. Usul Kafi, vol. 3, p. 116; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 67, p. 367.
22. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 67, p. 389.
23. 10:61
24. 4:41
25. Usul Kafi, vol. 1, p. 190.
26. 24:24
27. La'ali al-Akhbar, p. 462.
28. 50:21
29. 99:4
30. Safinat al-Bihar, vol. 2, s.v. yawm ["day"].
31. Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verses in question.
32. Ibid.
33. Tafsir Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 8, p. 454.
34. Abu al-Futuh's Tafsir.
35. Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, p. 111; Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.
36. Tafsir Safi, p. 361, under the blessed Verse in question.
37. 16:126
38. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.
39. Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 24, p. 111.

40. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn; Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.

Surah Fussilat, Verses 41 – 54

Surah Fussilat – Verse 41 – 43

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ

لا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

41. Indeed, those who disbelieved in the Reminder [***the Holy Qur'an***] ***when it came unto them*** [***shall be chastised***]. ***And indeed, it is an honorable*** [***well-fortified respected***] ***Book.***
42. Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it; [***it is***] ***sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise.***
43. Nothing is said unto you [***O Muhammad!***] ***except what was said unto the Messengers before you. Verily, your Lord is the Possessor of Forgiveness and the Possessor of excruciating chastisement.***

The Holy Qur'an reminds man of his neglect and negligence.

The title:

'Aziz (***"honorable"***)

is exclusively employed to refer to the Holy Qur'an from amongst Scriptures.

The blessed Verses are addressed to all polytheists and disbelievers who regard the Holy Qur'an as encompassing magic and falsehood and also those who do not believe in some of Qur'anic Injunctions, e.g. usury, murder, adultery, and calumnious accusation and slander as well as Divine Commands as to one-fifth tax and pilgrimage to Mecca, and act against them.

It also addresses those who subjectively interpret Qur'anic Verses like those regarding the Guardianship, Infallibility, and Purity of Ahl al-Bayt (Prophet's family).

Verse 42 is saying that Falsehood cannot find its way into it from any side, that is, there are no contradictions in its form, i.e., words, nor are they any falsity in it. No alteration may find its way into it.

There is neither decrease nor increase in it. It is well fortified and serves as the Argument for all responsible for their religious duties to the Day of Resurrection. Another Qur'anic Verse[1] makes a reference to the same:

"Indeed, it is We Who have sent down the Reminder and truly We will guard it [***from distortion and corruption attempted by disbelievers and the envious***]***."***

According to traditions narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as), there are no falsity in Qur'anic Verses concerning the past events and the prognostications about future.

It is said in a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that there is no point in Scriptures like the Bible to abrogate the Qur'an nor will there be any book in the future to do the same;

(*"Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it"*).[2]

Thus the Holy Qur'an stays unaltered in the face of passage of the time and falsehood may not penetrate into it, since it is descended from the Origin of Wisdom which is Firm as a consequence of which it stands unchanged at all times.

Verse 43 is a consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) as to disbelievers' accusations who called him by terms like magician, liar, poet, augur, soothsayer, and lunatic.

It is said unto the Prophet (S) that his predecessors were also the subject of false accusations and indeed his Lord is Oft-Forgiving and Merciful toward the repentant and He is also the Possessor of excruciating torment and chastisement against disbelievers and enemies of religion.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 44

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآناً أَعْجَمِيّاً لَقَالُوا لَوْلا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ أَأَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدىً وَشِفَاءٌ وَالَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمىً أُولَئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ

44. And if We had sent this as a Qur'an in a foreign language, they would have said: "Why are not its Verses explained in detail? What! [***A Book***] ***not in Arabic and*** [***the Messenger***] ***an Arab?" Say: "It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing. And as for those who disbelieve, there is deafness in their ears and it*** [***the Qur'an***] ***is blindness for them.*** [***As if***] ***they are those who are called from a place far away*** [***but they fail to hear the call***]***."***

The Arabic word a'jami is cognate with 'ujma designating intelligible, since other languages were

intelligible to Arabs hence the designation for non-Arabic languages. Enemies never desist from finding faults.

When the Holy Qur'an is in the Arabic tongue, they say that they are hard of hearing and when it is in any languages other than Arabic, they say it is not intelligible to them. In other words, the blessed Verse in question treats of the state of disbelievers, saying that had God Almighty revealed the Holy Qur'an in any language other than Arabic, they would have asked why it was not intelligible to them since the audience were Arabs.

The blessed Verse is saying that had the Holy Qur'an been sent to them in any tongue other than Arabic, they could ask why it had not been revealed in Arabic. Qur'anic exegets maintain that "non-Arabic" indicates any tongue other than Arabic, e.g. Persian and Turkish; however, the Holy Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic tongue since the Noble Prophet (S) was an Arab by descent.

The blessed Verse apparently makes a reference to the Arabs who, despite the revelation of the Holy Qur'an in eloquent Arabic, noticed that it is so eloquent in terms of form and meaning that it was hard for them to fully comprehend it hence they asked whey Qur'anic Verses were not quite intelligible to them.

Thus, God Almighty addresses His Messenger (S) and says unto him:

"O Muhammad! Say unto them that the Qur'an is a healing and guidance to those who believe."

It apparently indicates that the Holy Qur'an is the Path of guidance, happiness, and righteousness and its propagation may heal disbelievers' hearts and absolve them of their impurities. In fact, the Holy Qur'an is addressed to them through which they may find the path toward happiness and may thereby attain to their main goal.

It is worthy of note that any sound mind may comprehend the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an and anyone who fails to believe in Qur'anic Verses suffer from defects in their perceptive faculties such that they fail to perceive its message through their ears and hearts.

Upon the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, they are as if they hear sounds and voices from afar but fail to comprehend the messages, since their ears and hearts fail to perceive the inimitability of the Qur'an, hence their disbelief.

Surah Fussilat - Verse 45

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيهِ وَلَوْلا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ

45. And indeed We gave Moses the Scripture [***the Torah***]***, but dispute arose therein. And had it not been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord*** [***regarding granting respite***]***, the matter***

would have [definitely] been settled between them [and all disputants would have been chastised]. But truly, they are in grave doubt [and suspicion] thereto [the Qur'an].

Familiarity with the history of Prophets is a source of consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) and Muslims. Divine Lordship grants respites to sinners so that they may repent and attain to spiritual growth. God Almighty grants respites to sinners to repent otherwise they had no way to turn to repentance.

The blessed Verse is a consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) saying that the disputes concerning the Qur'an amongst Muslims and subjective interpretations thereof is not unprecedented since the people of Moses (as) did the same – some of them acknowledged the Torah as a Divinely Revealed Scripture and some denied his Prophetic Call.

The blessed Verse is saying that had it not been for a Word, i.e. God's Promise, that went forth before from Him regarding granting them respite, He would have definitely chastised them; however, the fact is that these disbelievers turn away from the Qur'anic Message and they will remain in doubt and suspicion, hence their disbelief.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 46

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحاً فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

46. Whosoever does righteous good deeds, it is for his own self; and whosoever does evil, it is against his own self. And your Lord is not at all unjust to [His] servants.

Favorable and unfavorable consequences follow man's conducts and he is not supposed to put the blame on others. There is no doubt concerning the fact that whoever does righteous good deeds will reap the benefits. Righteous good deeds are to be based on Qur'anic Injunctions and Islamic teachings. Such person will enjoy Divine Favors.

Au contraire, one who commits evil deeds, i.e. turns away from Divine Injunctions and follows concupiscent and satanic desires will pay for the evil consequences thereof. The torments in store for disbelievers are the consequences of their vicious deeds. God Almighty never wrongs His servants and it is worthy of note that any good or evil deed will lead to consequences.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 47

إِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرَاتٍ مِنْ أَكْمَامِهَا وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَى وَلا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِي قَالُوا آذَنَّاكَ مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيدٍ

47. To Him is referred the knowledge of the Hour. No fruit comes out of its sheath, nor does a female conceive nor brings forth* [*young*]*, except by His Omniscience. And on the Day when He will call unto them* [*polytheists saying*]*: "Where are My partners?" They will say: "We inform You that none of us bears witness to it* [*that they are Your partners*]*!"

The Arabic word ***akmam*** is the plural form of kimm ("sheath, calyx, perianth") and kumm ("sleeve"). Kumma is applied to head gear, like skullcap. The verbal form adannaka ("we inform you") derives from a-d-n ("inform, proclaim").

It is reported concerning the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question that the Noble Prophet (S) was inquired about the Hour of Resurrection. The blessed Verse was revealed as a reply to the question, saying that only God Almighty is Aware of the same.

The word:

al-sa'a (***"the Hour"***)

indicates Resurrection and the designation may refer to its spontaneity. Disbelievers inquired the Noble Prophet (S) regarding the time of Resurrection and he replied that it will be spontaneous and dependent upon Divine Will and it is solely God Almighty Who is All-Aware of it.

No fruit comes out of its sheath unless God Almighty God Almighty is All-Aware of its quantity, quality, color, and its other characteristics. No female conceives unless God Almighty is All-Aware of the contents of the womb in terms of its sex, form, complexion, and so on. No female brings forth young unless God Almighty is All-Aware of the time of delivery.

On the Day of Resurrection, polytheists and disbelievers will be reproached thus:

"Where are those who were associated as partners with me by you? Today is the day of your misfortune. Seek them so that they may deliver you from torments."

They will reply:

"We have already informed You that there is no witness to bear testimony to Your partners."

It will be at that time that disbelievers confess to Divine Unity since they will attain to certainty concerning the same. What requires arguments to prove in this world will become evident on the Day of Resurrection.

Those who worshipped idols and imagined that they were of exalted stations realize that there are no partners for Allah and they dissociate themselves from idolatry and idolaters.

The closing clauses of the blessed Verse,

“We inform You that none of us bears witness to it [*that they are Your partners*]*”*

may refer to those whom polytheists and disbelievers set up as partners of God Almighty, hence they say that there is not anyone from amongst them to bear witness to the veracity of their false claim as to associating partners with Him.

Surah Fussilat – Verses 48 – 49

وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَظَنُّوا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مَحِيصٍ

لا يَسْأَمُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَؤُوسٌ قَنُوطٌ

48. And those whom they used to invoke before [*in this world*] ***shall disappear from them, and they will perceive that they have no place of refuge.***
49. Man does not become tired of invoking Allah to grant him good things, but when an evil touches him, then he gives up all hope and is lost in despair.

The Arabic word mahis indicates refuge or place of refuge. On the Day of Resurrection, polytheists and disbelievers find out that they have lost their past opportunities and a dire fate is in store for them. It will be at that time that the idols invoked by them have disappeared.

They will find out that they have no way out and they may not set their hopes on idols any longer and they have definitely no refuge.

Verse 49 is saying that man always seeks material gains and happiness and invokes God Almighty to grant them to him and is never tired of invocation, but when he is touched with some affliction, he will lose his hope and turns away from God Almighty. The Arabic words ya’s and qunut indicate hopelessness and despair respectively.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 50

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَّاءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلَى رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَى فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ

50. And indeed, if We give him a taste of Mercy from Us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say: “This is due to my [*merit*]; [*he becomes so arrogant that he says:*] ***I think not that the Hour will be established. But if I am brought back to my Lord, surely, there will be for me the best*** [*exalted state*] ***with Him. Then, We verily, will show to the disbelievers what they have***

done and We shall make them taste a severe torment.

Seeking Mammon leads to neglect and at times denial of Resurrection. Man is intolerant and arrogant and upon his access to bounties becomes arrogant. Likewise, upon tasting afflictions, man loses his heart and cries out for assistance.

The blessed Verse makes a reference to one of the undesirable states of men who lack knowledge and faith, namely, arrogance and vanity, saying:

"Whenever we give him a taste of Mercy from Us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say: 'This is due to my merit.'"

Such miserable and arrogant person forgets that had it not been for Divine Favor, he would have been afflicted with adversity. It was in the same vein that arrogant Korah who was granted many a material gain for his trial refrained from doing good.

When he was asked to do good in return for Divine Favors, he claimed that he possessed his material possessions because of his knowledge and merits,

"He said: 'This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess'"[3].

The blessed Verse further adds that such arrogance will lead him to denial of Resurrection and he will say:

"I do not think that the Hour will be established, but whenever I return to my Lord, surely, there will be for me the best [rewards and bounties."

He says that his Lord has cherished him in this world and will surely grant him better rewards!

Surah Fussilat – Verse 51

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَى بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ

51. And when We show favor unto man, he withdraws and turns away, but when evil touches him he has recourse to long supplications.

Welfare and hardship are the best means of assaying man's characters and his spiritual blights. The blessed Verse expresses the states of such people at the time of fortune and misfortune in this mundane world and makes mention of their forgetfulness at the time of enjoying bounties and his restlessness at the time of afflictions.

The blessed Verse is saying that when God Almighty provides man with bounties, he turns away

arrogantly from God, but when he is touched by the slightest adversity, he invokes God Almighty many a time to remove it.

The Arabic word ***na'*** is taken from na'y which literally indicates going away and when it is collocated with:

janib (***"side"***)***,***

it connotes arrogance and vanity, since the arrogant turn away their faces and go away with indifference.

The word:

'arid (***"wide"***)

is the opposite of tawil ("long"). Both are employed in the Arabic tongue to connote multiplicity.

Such faithless and godless person suffers from such miserable states of mind at all times. When he is granted bounties, he becomes avaricious, arrogant, and forgetful and when such bounties turn away from him, he loses his heart and beseeches God Almighty to bestow them upon him once more.

Au contraire, men of truth and the true followers of Prophetic teachings are so tolerant and rich inwardly that neither bounties nor afflictions may make them lose their heart. The most profitable transactions and the greatest of remunerations may not keep them from remembrance of God.

They are well acquainted with vicissitudes of life and are aware that unfavorable circumstances serve as reawakening and favorable states of affairs are Divine trials. Adversities are at times the consequences of man's neglect and bounties at times urge God's servants to express their gratitude.

The most significant signs of belief in God Almighty include magnanimity, i.e. greatness of spirit, broadmindedness, tolerance, and preparedness to confront hardships, vicissitudes, and struggling against the unfavorable states of mind resulting from availability of bounties.

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) in teaching his companions certain invocations says:

"We invoke God Almighty to help us be so tolerant that no bounty may make us arrogant and vain and no aim may impede us from obeying Divine Commands, and may not regret nor grieve upon the hour of death."[4]

Surah Fussilat - Verse 52

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ مَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

52. Say: "Tell me, if it [***the Qur'an***] ***is from Allah, you disbelieve in it. Who is more astray than one***

who is in opposition far away* [*from Allah's Straight Path through his utter denial of the Qur'an*]*?

The wise keep away from contingent losses. If the Qur'an is Revealed by God Almighty, what will happen to those who disbelieved?

The blessed Verse in question is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

"Say unto these disbelievers if you know that the Qur'an is Revealed by God Almighty but you still do not acknowledge that it is Divine Revelation, who is more astray than one who knows the Truth but still denies it and opposes it with such forcefulness? Such person is quite far away from Truth."

In other words, such person has gone to extreme in his opposition and enmity against God Almighty.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 53 – 54

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِنْ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ أَلَا إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُحِيطٌ

53. We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this* [*the Qur'an*] *is the Truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?
54. Know that they are in doubt concerning the Meeting with their Lord on the Day of Resurrection. Verily! He it is Who is surrounding all things!

Divine Manifestations of His Omnipotence and Omniscience are innumerable.

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe"

indicates that besides the Signs perceptible to man, he will be shown further Signs in future. These two blessed Verses closing the Chapter in question make mention of two important points which in fact include a summation of the points raised herein. The first Verse treats of Divine Unity and the Holy Qur'an and the second one makes mention of Resurrection.

Verse 53 says:

"We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this* [*the Qur'an*] *is the Truth."

Signs of the horizon (ayat afaqi) include creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars with the order governing them, creation of all kinds of animals, plants, mountains, and seas with their innumerable

wonders and mysterious creatures whose novel mysteries are unraveled in time and each of which demonstrates the Truth of His Pure Essence.

Signs of the soul (ayat anfusi) include creation of different systems of human body, the order governing the wondrous mechanisms of brain and the systematic movements of heart, blood vessels, textures, and bones, and coagulation of semen and growth of embryo in the womb, and above all, the mysteries and wonders of human soul each aspect of which reveals the Omniscience of God Almighty, the Creator of the world.

It is true that these Signs have already been sufficiently manifested by God Almighty, but taking into account the verbal form:

sanurihim **(*"we show unto them"*)*,***

one notices that this present verb is in the progressive mode indicating that such manifestation is an ongoing process and even if man lives for hundreds of thousand years, he will discover many a novel mystery and will notice Divine Signs in time, since the mysteries of this world is endless.

All books on natural sciences and anthropology in all their dimensions including anatomy, physiology, psychology, and psychiatry, and also the sciences of botany, zoology, mineralogy, astronomy and so on all serve as expositions of Divine Unity and knowing God, since they generally unravel wondrous mysteries which demonstrate the Omniscience and Omnipotence of the Creator of this world.

At times, a scientist devotes all his life to one of these sciences, or one branch from amongst tens of branches of one of these sciences, but at the end of his life, he regrets that he knows nothing about that branch and his limited knowledge has made him perceive the depth of his ignorance.

The blessed Verse 53 is complemented with a beauteous and meaningful sentence:

"Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?"

What Signs are more evident than the Manifestation of His Omnipotence through Creation of all creatures, leaves of trees, petals of flowers, mysterious layers of brain, delicate multilayer membranes of eyes, the face of the sky, the heart of the earth, and in short all creatures demonstrate the Signs of Divine Unity and bear witness to Divine Creation of the world.

The above constitutes one of the well-known interpretations of the blessed Verse in question according to which the blessed Verse solely treats of Divine Unity and the manifestation of the Signs of Truth in horizons and souls.

The other interpretation treats of the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an which may be summed up thus:

"We show Our Diverse Signs and Miracles in different regions of the Arabian Peninsula as well as other

regions of the world and We show Our Signs regarding these polytheists and disbelievers so that they may know that the Holy Qur'an is Divine Revelation."

Signs of horizon also include the triumph of Islam in different battlegrounds, in the arena of logical arguments produced in debates and also in different regions conquered by the Islamic faith prevailing thoughts.

The Muslim community formed a minority at the time of the Revelation of these Verses in Mecca. They enjoyed no opportunities to engage in propagation activities.

Consequently, upon Divine Command, they emigrated and in a short while were able to conquer many a land and their religion was embraced by a large number of people throughout the world. Signs of souls also include the triumph of Muslims over Meccan polytheists and disbelievers in the battle of Badr and the conquest of Mecca and penetration of the light of Islam into the hearts of many of the conquered.

These Signs of the horizon and the soul demonstrated that the Holy Qur'an is Divine Revelation. Thus God Almighty Who is the Witness of all things bore witness to the Truth of the Holy Qur'an as Divine Revelation.

The last Verse treats of the origin of the adversities of this polytheist, corrupt, and tyrannous group of people, saying:

"Be aware that they are in doubt and suspicion regarding their meeting with their Lord on the Day of Resurrection."

They commit all crimes and disgracing deeds since they do not believe in Divine Reckoning and Recompense. Their hearts are wrapped up in veils of neglect and arrogance and forgetting the fact that they shall meet their Lord on the Day of Resurrection has denigrated them from the zenith of humanity to nadir of humility.

However, they should know that

"God surrounds all things."

He is All-Aware of their intentions, words, and deeds all which are being recorded for that great Tribunal. The Arabic word mirya designates entertaining doubt in making decisions and some Qur'anic exegets maintain that it indicates great doubt and suspicion.

1. 15:9
2. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn; 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir.
3. 28:78
4. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 64.

Surah al-Shura, Chapter 42, Verses 1-26

(The Consultation)
Section (juz’ 25)
Number of Verses: 53

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

This Meccan Chapter has fifty three Verses and its title derives from the question of shura (“consultation”) referred to in Verse 38.

The Chapter treats of the basic tenets of the Islamic faith, e.g. Divine Unity, Resurrection, Prophethood, as well as ethical and social issues. From amongst the twenty-nine Chapters opening with detached letters, the longest series of detached letters is attested in the Chapter in question.

It is worthy of note that the Chapter unravels the mystery of detached letters, since they are followed by:

“Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation unto you,”

i.e. the Revelation is sent down employing the Arabic letters of alphabet available to everyone whom are challenged to produce the like of it.

The Merits of Recitation of the Chapter

According to a tradition narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

“One who recites Surah al-Shura is among those on whom angels send down Divine Mercy and for whom they ask forgiveness. [1]

Surah al-Shura - Verses 1 - 3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

عسق

كَذَلِكَ يُوحِي إِلَيْكَ وَإِلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

1. HM.
2. 'A-S-Q.
3. Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation unto you* [*O Muhammad*] *as* [*He sent Revelation to*] *those before you.

The detached letters in Verse 2 allude to the Divine Beauteous Names: the All-Wise (hakim), the All-Glorious (majid), the Omniscient ('alim), the All-Hearing (sami'), the Omnipotent (qadir) making reference to Divine Favors and Bounties bestowed upon His Messenger (S).

Detached letters are to be attested elsewhere in the Chapter. The ones mentioned in the first and the second Chapters, numbering five, are the most detailed of all. The detached letters HM open seven Qur'anic Chapters2, but further detached letters, i.e. 'A-S-Q , are found in the Chapter in question.

It was recurrently mentioned above that much has been said regarding the Qur'anic detached letters and exegets have dealt with the subject in many a discussion.

According to the renowned Qur'anic exeget, Tabarsi, eleven interpretations have been provided for Qur'anic detached letters whose remarkable discussions were briefly treated in the opening sections of Chapters 2, 3, 7, and 19.

Following detached letters, as usual, mention is made of Revelation and the Holy Qur'an, saying:

"Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation unto you* [*O Muhammad*] *as* [*He sent Revelation to*] *those before you."

The adverb

"likewise"

actually makes a reference to the contents of the Chapter and its exalted subject matter.

It is worthy of note that Divine Revelation springs from the same fountainhead – Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence and the contents of Revelation are in principle the same with regards to all Prophetic Calls, though there exist minor changes in terms of requisites of the time, evolution of man, and generalities.

It is noteworthy that mention is made of seven Divine Attributes each of which is in some way related to the question of Revelation, two instances of which are:

"the Omnipotent, the Omniscient."

These two Attributes necessitate that Divine Revelation be wise and harmonious with human evolutionary requirements.

The verbal form:

yuha (***"sends down Revelation"***)

is in the present tense and indicates that sending down Divine Revelation has been an ongoing process from the creation of Adam to the time of the Seal of the Prophets (S).

The phrase:

qablaka (***"before you"***)

which is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) is recurrent and indicates that he had predecessors in Prophethood.

The point is that

ba'daka (***"after you"***)

is not attested in the Holy Qur'an which indicates that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is the last Prophet. Despite the fact that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is the Seal of the Prophets, his name precedes others which indicates his exalted state.

Divine Omnipotence, Omniscience, Wisdom, and Glory are all manifested in Divine Revelation, hence Divine Revelation and Word deserve further attention.

All Noble Prophets (as) are all related to the springhead of Divine Omnipotence and Glory; as a consequence of which whoever confronts them in opposition will tread the path to perdition.

It is one of the inimitabilities of the Holy Qur'an that clauses and expressions are made of common letters and words the like of which may not be produced by anyone. The system of making Laws, i.e. Revelation and Guidance, belongs to the Creator of the order of creation, e.g. that of the heavens and the earth, Who presides over the world of existence.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 4

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

4. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and He is the Most High, the Most Great.

The blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the fact that all Prophets and Messengers were appointed by God Almighty to guide mankind with the same word so that they worship God Almighty with His Divine Attributes of Glory, Beauty, Oneness, and Eternity.

They were also reminded of the fact that God Almighty is Omniscient, Omnipotent, All-Glorious, and Just and all the spheres of the heavens, the earth, and whatever exists between them are subject to His Omnipotence and He encompasses all the worlds through His Glory, Omnipotence and Omniscience and He is the Provider and the Fosterer of them all. He is Superior to all existent beings.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 5

تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَلَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

5. Nearly the heavens [***through the Greatness of Revelation***] ***might be rent asunder from above them and the angels glorify the praises of their Lord*** [***with gratitude***]***, and ask for forgiveness for those on the earth. Truly, Allah is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.***

The heavens are impressed by Divine Revelation. How is it that some people are not affected by it.

"The heavens being rent asunder from above them"

may refer to Divine Glory and Greatness that keep the heavens from being rent asunder.

It may also refer to polytheists' groundless claims as to associating partners with Allah for which the heavens may be rent asunder and drive them to perdition, as the people of Moses (as) requested him to show God unto them and heard the reply:

"You shall not see Me."

Consequently, Moses (as) was assigned to look at the mountain and if it stayed in its place, he would be able to see Him, but when His Lord manifested Himself, the mountain trembled and Moses (as) became unconscious and those people were destroyed by Divine Wrath.

The blessed Verse may also make a reference to Resurrection through which polytheists and disbelievers are warned that the heavens will be soon rent asunder and angels praise Divine Glory and invoke God Almighty to forgive the inhabitants of the earth.

It is thus confirmed when it is thus said unto His Messenger (S):

“Be Aware that God Almighty is Oft-Forgiving and Most Gracious such that He will grant His Mercy and Forgiveness upon believers rather than disbelievers when the heavens will be rent asunder.”

At that time, angels will invoke God Almighty to forgive believers as it is reflected in Surah al-Ghafir that invocations by angels as to Forgiving is solely for believers.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 6

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ اللَّهُ حَفِيظٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ

6. And as for those who take as guardians others besides Him, Allah is Protector over them and you [***O Muhammad***] ***are not a guardian over them*** [***to make them believe***]***.***

It is the Noble Prophet’s (S) duty to impart the Divine Message, but if people turn away from him, he will not be responsible for their disbelief. He is solely responsible for their guidance rather than for making them believe in God Almighty and embrace the Islamic faith.

The blessed Verse in question is a consolation to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) to entertain no grief for polytheists’ disbelief in Divine Unity and associating partners with God Almighty, since their disbelief may not affect them.

He is not a guardian over them, but his sole responsibility is to impart the Divine Message, whether they believe in God Almighty and tread the Path of Guidance or veer off the Path out of obduracy and fall into the abyss of error.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 7

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ قُرْآناً عَرَبِيّاً لِتُنْذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لا رَيْبَ فِيهِ فَرِيقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيقٌ فِي السَّعِيرِ

7. And thus We have revealed unto you [***O Muhammad***]***, a Qur’an in Arabic that you may warn the Mother of the Town*** [***Mecca***] ***and all around it and warn*** [***them***] ***of the Day of Assembling*** [***Resurrection***] ***of which there is no doubt, when a party will be in Paradise and a party in the blazing Fire.***

It is reported in traditions that Mecca is the Mother of the Town, since it was the first town which was dry following the Deluge. The Day of Assembling is one of the attributes of Resurrection whereon all people shall assemble in one place.

The clause:

“of which there is no doubt”

is attested eleven times for Resurrection, four times for the Holy Qur’an, and once for the time of death. In other words, noticing the manifestations of Resurrection in nature – rejuvenation in springtime and withering away in autumn – man is not supposed to entertain doubts as to raising of the dead on the Day of Resurrection.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that in like manner that upon Prophet Muhammad’s (S) predecessors were sent Scriptures in the languages of their peoples, the Holy Qur’an is sent down upon him in the Arabic tongue such that Arabs may comprehend its contents.

“That you may warn the Mother of the Town** [**Mecca**] **and all around it”

intends to say that the Noble Prophet (S) was supposed to warn the people of Mecca and its vicinity that what was in store for former nations who denied their Prophets.

“And warn** [**them**] **of the Day of Assembling”

indicates that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) was to inform his people of the Day of Resurrection on which God Almighty shall assemble all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth as to which there is no doubt.

Then, God Almighty divides people on the Day of Resurrection into two groups:

“a party will be in Paradise and a party in the blazing Fire,”

in other words, a group will go to Paradise owing to their obedience to God Almighty and another group will go to Hell due to their sins and vicious deeds committed in this world.

Surah al-Shura – Verses 8 – 9

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمُونَ مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلا نَصِيرٍ

أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ فَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

***8. And if Allah had willed, He could have made them one nation, but** [**He provides them with free choice and**] **admits whom He wills to His Mercy. And the wrong doers will have neither a protector nor a helper** [**on that Day**].*
9. Or have they taken** [**for worship**] **guardians besides Him? But Allah, He Alone is the** [**True**] **Protector, and it is He Who gives life to the dead and He is Able to do all things.

God Almighty is All-Wise and all His Acts are done wisely, even if human thought fails to perceive His Wisdom.

Thus, when God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an that He cherishes or denigrates whom He Wills indicates that those who deserve Guidance and exalted stations through their faith and doing righteous good deeds will be on the Path of Divine Mercy and Guidance through Divine Will, whereas those who hinder themselves from bliss through their disbelief, hypocrisy, and obduracy will not be helped by God Almighty.

Put the case that upon entering your home you notice that a thief is there. You would lock the door to confine him and report the house break to the police. You would lock the door but the thief has made you lock the door. God Almighty seals up some hearts and denigrates some or leads some astray, but Divine Wrath is the consequence of people's disbelief and misdeeds.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to Divine Omnipotence as to making all mankind believe in Divine Unity and send all of them to Paradise, but Divine Will and Omniscience requires that each and every person is supposed to voluntarily find him way to happiness and tread the Path of Guidance and enjoy Divine Mercy and Favor due to his own righteous good deeds and proceed on the Path to Paradise.

Nonetheless, those who wrong themselves and voluntarily turn away from Divine Mercy, they will have neither friends nor helpers, since all beings are the friends of God's friends and enemies of God's enemies.

Verse 9 is saying that disbelievers selected objects of worship and guardians from amongst idols whereas God Almighty is the only Protector who possesses all gains and losses as well as life and death. How do polytheists and disbelievers select friends besides God Almighty, whereas God Almighty is your friend and guardian and their life and death are subject to His Will and Omnipotence? He is the Creator of all beings and they shall return unto Him.

He shall raise the dead, since He is Able to do anything. He brought everything from non-existence into existence and He is Able to raise the dead and bestow a new life to them.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 10

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكْمُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبِّي عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ

10. And in whatsoever you differ, the decision thereof is with Allah. Such is Allah, my Lord in Whom I put my trust and to Him I turn in repentance.

So long as man exists, there are differences of opinion which in turn necessitates Divine Laws and

religion.

Thus, it may not be claimed that man is needless of religion. It is solely religion which not only provides solutions for not only ethical and doctrinal questions but also for economic, political, and the like issues. It is incumbent upon man to refer to God Almighty at the time of disputes and differences of opinion, to put one's trust in Him, to turn to Him in repentance.

Man is not supposed to entertain concerns as to Divine Decrees, since putting one's trust in God Almighty and turning to Him in repentance are the consequences of belief in His Lordship;

(***"Such is Allah, my Lord in Whom I put my trust and to Him I turn in repentance"***).

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question resembles in terms of content to another Qur'anic Verse, saying:

"If you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and in the Last Day"[3].

The relative pronoun ***ma*** in the clause:

ma akhtalaftum (***"in whatsoever you differ"***)

indicates generalization requiring believers to refer to Divine Decrees and Decisions in their differences in terms of religion, Qur'anic equivocal Verses, legal decrees and laws, sciences, and teachings.

It is incumbent upon believers to refer to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) who may decide on behalf of God Almighty.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 11

فَاطِرُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجاً وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ أَزْوَاجاً يَذْرَأُكُمْ فِيهِ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

11. The Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made for you spouses from yourselves, and for the cattle [***also***] ***mates. By this means He creates you*** [***in the wombs***]. ***There is nothing like Him and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.***

The Arabic word fatir indicates creator of something unprecedented. Although nothing is like God Almighty, but there is a nexus between Him and all things. He is the All-Hearer and the All-Seer and sees all creatures.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that God Almighty to Whom are referred all decisions and

He is the Lord of the Day of Recompense is also the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

He has made for you spouses from yourselves through His Omnipotence such that men may have mates. He has also made for cattle male and female mates. It is through His Perfect Wisdom that He has made mates for mankind and animals for procreation through which their genera may survive extinction.

The blessed Verse also says:

"There is nothing like Him,"

referring to the fact that nothing may be likened to His Essence. In other words, He is Unique in terms of Essential Truth and True Attributes. The expression is emphatic as it is said in common usage that nobody may do something as somebody else does.

Divine Essence is Unique in terms of His True Manifestations, but He has manifested some of His Attributes, e.g. hearing and vision, in His creatures such that they may recognize Him through such Attributes and praise His Glory.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 12

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

12. To Him belongs the keys of the heavens and the earth. He enlarges provision for whom He wills, and straitens [***it for whom He wills***]. ***Verily, He is the All-Knower of everything*** [***and His enlarging and straitening the provisions are based on His Omniscience and Wisdom***].

The Arabic word ***maqalid*** is the plural form of miqlid ("key"). In the same manner that one may use a key to lock or unlock something, One Who has the key to the heavens and the earth may enlarge or straiten provision.

The keys of existence are at times material means as intermediaries of Divine Bounties like rain that rejuvenates the earth and at times they are Divine Names as mentioned in the Prayer of Samat:

"O Lord! We call You by the Name that if It is called unto the closed gates of the heavens, they will be opened through Your Mercy."

Although enlarging and straitening provision and sustenance are dependent upon Divine Will, but man is not supposed to desist from making endeavors.

It is said in the Holy Qur'an:

“Follow Divine Bounties,”

that is, make efforts to earn your living.

The keys to the heavens and the earth are subject to His Omnipotence and each and every person is granted his provision as ordained by Divine Decree as per His Wisdom and the order of the world. It is His Divine Will that He enlarges the provision of some people and straitens that of others.

“Verily, He is the All-Knower of everything”

refers to the fact that enlarging and straitening of provisions for different people are not haphazard but they all depend upon His Wisdom and Discretion as He is the Lord and Provider of all things and has preordained portions for everything and everyone.

The motif is elsewhere4 reflected in the Holy Qur’an:

“And there is nothing a thing, but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send it not down except in a known measure.”

It is worthy of note that some Qur’anic exegets interpret:

***“the stores of Allah** (**khaza’in Allah**)”*

as Divine Ordainments. In other words, everything is in the stores of Divine Omnipotence and He sends down whatever He wills.

However, some other Qur’anic exegets maintain that the phrase:

“stores of Allah”

indicates all beings that exist in the world of existence and the material world.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 13

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحاً وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَنْ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبُرَ عَلَى الْمُشْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ اللَّهُ يَجْتَبِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي إِلَيْهِ مَنْ يُنِيبُ

13. He has ordained** [**from amongst religious laws**] **for you the same religion which He ordained for Noah and that which We have revealed to you** [**O Muhammad** (**S**)] **and that which We ordained for Abraham** (**as**), **Moses** (**as**), **and Jesus** (**as**) **saying you should establish religion and make no divisions in it. Intolerable for the polytheists is that to which you** [**O Muhammad** (**S**)] **call them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides unto Himself who turns to Him in repentance and in obedience.

The names of the five Arch-Prophets, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus (as) and the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), are attested in the blessed Verse in question. Prophetic Calls rest on the same basis, since all these eminent Prophets called people unto monotheism, Resurrection, fearing God Almighty, justice, establishing prayers, fasting, doing good to one's parents, and taking care of the needy.

The Arabic verbal form shara'a is a cognate of shari'a designating a tributary leading to larger rivers, e.g. Shari'a 'Alqama leading to Euphrates. The word connotes religious laws since they lead to perfection attributes and states.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that there is one true religion since the religious laws of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) are consistent with those of former Arch-Prophets. The Verse addresses the followers of their religions that if they convert to the Islamic faith they merely follow all true Prophets.

The Noble Prophet of Islam (S) received Divine Revelation as it had been already revealed to Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Noah (as). They were recommended to establish the religion of Truth and make no division in it.

The blessed Verse refers to the fact that the religion and laws of all Prophets were on a par and they unanimously believed in Divine Unity, monotheism, steadfastness in beliefs, and abstention from division due to individual tastes and inclinations.

It is worthy of note that polytheists and disbelievers do not follow any religion, since all Prophets called people to worship the One God, but they associated idols and other objects of worship with God Almighty imagining that they could intercede on their behalf. Thus, they disfavored Prophets' unanimous call to monotheism.

The blessed Verse addresses the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) saying:

"O Muhammad! God Almighty to Whom you call them to worship chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides unto Himself who turns to Him in repentance and in obedience."

Divine Guidance is granted to one who turns away from people and turn to Truth wholeheartedly and indubitably God Almighty paves the Path for such person. Thus, it becomes evident that it is incumbent upon God's servant to turn to Truth voluntarily and God Almighty will guide him to the Straight Path.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 14

وَمَا تَفَرَّقُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْياً بَيْنَهُمْ وَلَوْلا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمّىً لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُورِثُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ

14. And they divided not** [**to turn away from the Prophets**] **till after knowledge** [**as to their true

***Calling*] had come unto them, through the spirit of enmity and envy amongst themselves. And had it not been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord for an appointed term [*respite for disbelievers*], the matter would have been settled amongst them [*the the followers of falsehood would have perished*]. And verily, those who were made to inherit the Scriptures after them are in grave doubt concerning it.**

The clauses:

"after knowledge had come unto them"

and

"were made to inherit the Scriptures"

designate that despite their knowledge as to Truth and having inherited the Scriptures, they still tread the path of division.

Although the Prophets asked them to keep their solidarity, they were divided and the source of most of divisions is envy, wrong doing, and greed. God Almighty, because of His Lordship, provides man with respites such that he may enjoy the opportunity to reveal his essential character.

The blessed Verse is saying that differences of opinion concerning religious issues were merely due to rebellion and prejudice prevalent in the Age of Ignorance which, despite evident truth of the Islamic faith, led to denial of Islam and the Holy Qur'an.

However, God Almighty granted them respite and postponed their torment because of His Omniscience otherwise these disbelievers could have the same dire fate which had been in store for the peoples of 'Ad and Thamud.

It is worthy of note that followers of certain religions, such as Jews and Christians, were acquainted with the name and characteristics of the Seal of the Prophets (S) attested in their Scriptures; however, because of their bias and arrogance, they failed to seek the true religion and submit to the Will of Allah, as a consequence of which they have remained in doubt and suspicion.

They failed to comprehend the truth but still entertained doubts in their hearts.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 15

فَلِذَلِكَ فَادْعُ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَلا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَقُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ لا حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمُ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

15. So unto this then invite [*the people of the Book, O Muhammad! Since they are obdurate and*

stand in enmity against you*] *and stand firm as you are commanded, and follow not their desires but say: "I believe in whatsoever Allah ahs sent down of the Book and I am commanded to administer justice among you. Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us our deeds and for you your deeds* [*i.e., we are not responsible for each other's deeds*]. *There is no dispute between us and you. Allah will assemble us and to Him is the final return.

Administration of justice is the consequence of belief in certain values, e.g. acknowledgement of the Path of Truth and the injunctions of the Messengers of God Almighty, turning away from lusts and vain desires, belief in standing at Divine Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection, and receiving recompense befitting one's deeds. Divine Injunction as to administration of justice and the aforesaid values are treated in the blessed Verse in question.

The leader of the Muslim community is supposed to stand firm as to the tenets of his call rather than submit to people's unlawful demands.

The blessed Verse is addressing the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

"O Muhammad! When the People of the Book entertain doubts as to the Divine source of the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an and your Divine Call owing to their illusions, do not desist from guiding them and propagation of the Islamic faith, but as per your Divine Call stand firm and strive hard on your way so that your doubts may turn into certainty. Do not follow their vain and concupiscent desires and speak according to their beliefs and ways."

It is quoted from Tibyan that Mughayra asked the Noble Prophet (S) to desist from his call and he would grant half of his property to him in return.

'Utba also asked the Noble Prophet (S) to desist from his call and he will marry his daughter to him. Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed. However, the blessed Verse is applicable in other issues as well.

God Almighty says unto His Messenger (S):

"Say that you are submitted to My Command and I shall act according to Qur'anic Injunctions since you are appointed to judge amongst them with justice."

The blessed Verse is apparently saying that the Noble Prophet (S) is appointed to establish harmony and consensus amongst people such that they all stand firm as to the true religion. Following imparting the Divine Message unto people and stood firm in imparting Divine Guidance and tolerated their wrong doing patiently but lost his hope in guiding them, he said:

"Your Lord and My Lord is Allah. We shall bear the consequences of our deeds as you shall bear yours. Now that you are provided with Divine decisive Argument, there remains no excuse for you in this world. There should exist neither enmity nor debates between us.

God Almighty shall assemble us on the Day of Resurrection and He shall judge between us and to Him shall return all things."

Surah al-Shura - Verse 16

وَالَّذِينَ يُحَاجُّونَ فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِيبَ لَهُ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَعَلَيْهِمْ غَضَبٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ

16. And those who dispute concerning Allah, after they have accepted His Call, of no use is their dispute before their Lord and on them is Wrath, and for them will be a severe torment.

The Arabic word ***muhaja*** deriving from h-j-j ("to intend") indicates debate through which someone makes attempts at substantiating or refuting something.

When a certain path is substantiated and proven for someone, he is not supposed to desist from the same due to doubts and temptations. When one believes in someone, he is not supposed to be affected by rumors and let go of him.

When one perceives the path of intellection and Divine disposition, he is not supposed to engage in debates in that respect. The blessed Verse is a critique of those who enter into debates concerning the religion of God.

On the day of Covenant, man acknowledged His Lordship and he is not supposed to break his promise.

The other point is that those Jews and Christians who saw the attributes of the Seal of the Prophets (S) in their Scriptures and acknowledged the same but refuted his Divine Call afterwards may not produce Arguments as to the refutation of the Divine Call. Some of the People of the Book had converted to the Islamic faith but assumed that their former religions were better and said unto Muslims that their Scriptures and Prophets preceded the Holy Qur'an and the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and claimed their precedence and superiority.

Having acknowledged the Prophetic Call of the Noble Prophet of Islam, their arguments may not be accepted by God Almighty but they shall be subject to Divine Wrath and severe torments in the Hereafter.

The blessed Verse might as well allude to those who had acknowledged the Prophetic Call after decisive arguments were produced before them, but they engaged in debates concerning the religion of God Almighty and manner of its injunctions.

Resorting to their limited intellect, they claimed that certain injunctions could have been different. Such claims shall lead to Divine Wrath and excruciating torments.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 17

اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ

17. It is Allah Who has sent down the Book in truth and the Balance. And what can make you know that perhaps the Hour is close at hand?

The Holy Qur'an has a very exalted Truth that aims at our happiness.

"The Hour"

is one of the attributes of Resurrection, since it shall arrive unexpectedly. The blessed Verse in question makes God Almighty known through His Book, the Holy Qur'an. It is Allah Who has revealed the Holy Qur'an in truth and has made its laws and injunctions according to the Balance.

Two attributes of the Holy Qur'an are also treated in this blessed Verse: the Truth of the Holy Qur'an and the fact that the Holy Qur'an is the Balance for assaying through which a distinction may be drawn between Truth and Falsehood.

Divine Names, Bounties, and Attributes are revealed through the Holy Qur'an and Qur'anic Verses indicate that it is revealed by Absolute Truth. In short, God Almighty gives further details about the Holy Qur'an since He reveals its inimitable Verses which are revealed by the Omniscient and All-Wise Lord.

On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an gives details about God Almighty, since it is known by Divine Beauteous Names and Attributes which are blessings through which we may have a name for truth and invoke and glorify Him by that Name.

"And what can make you know that perhaps the Hour is close at hand?"

The sentence is apparently a resumptive one reminding the Noble Prophet (S) that although he is the Messenger of Allah (S) and aware of the mysteries of creation, but the Hour of Resurrection is solely known by God Almighty.

In reply to disbelievers inquiring about the Hour of Resurrection, he is asked to say unto them that God Alone is aware of it and it may be close at hand.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 18

يَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِينَ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مُشْفِقُونَ مِنْهَا وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ أَلا إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُمَارُونَ فِي السَّاعَةِ لَفِي ضَلالٍ بَعِيدٍ

18. Those who believe not therein seek to hasten it, while those who believe are fearful of it, and know that it is the very truth. Verily, those who dispute concerning the Hour are certainly in error far away.

When those in error have not gone too far away, they may be found and saved, but if they are too far away from the Straight Path, it will be hard or impossible to find and save them from error. Disbelievers and polytheists were always hasty in their judgments concerning Prophets' warnings against Resurrection and asked when such torments happen and why they are not realized.

The Arabic verbal form ***yumaruna*** designates persistence in doubt and

mushfiq (*"fearful"*)

is cognate with shafaqat ("fear accompanied with precaution").

The blessed Verse is saying that since disbelievers did not believe in Resurrection, they were apparently mocking and said unto the Noble Prophet (S):

"O Muhammad! When Resurrection against which you warn us will happen."

However, believers were certain that Resurrection would happen as a consequence of which they always stood in awe as to its occurrence. Believers tread the path of vice and righteousness but those who doubt the happening of Resurrection are in error far away from the Straight Path and shall sink into the abyss of humility.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 19

اللَّهُ لَطِيفٌ بِعِبَادِهِ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْقَوِيُّ الْعَزِيزُ

19. Allah is very Gracious and Kind to His servants. He gives provisions to whom He wills. And He is the All-Strong, the Omnipotent.

Grace embodies gentleness and consideration. Allah is Most Gracious, that is, He is All-Aware of the minutest affairs and is the Omnipotent Lord Who does anything with facility.[5]

Divine Omnipotence and Grace guarantee provision of sustenance for God's servants. Divine Might is Invincible.

Latif (*"the Gracious"*)

is one of the Most Beauteous Names of God Almighty which is cognate with lutf ("gentleness, grace, compassion, mercy"). Grace may indicate that God Almighty provides everyone with his daily

sustenance in a manner unbeknown to him.

Divine Grace and Bounty is infinite and enlarging and straitening provision solely depends upon Divine Will. Divine provision is based on His Wisdom and consideration of common good and He is the Omnipotent, the Dominant, and the Victorious.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 20

مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الْآخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهُ فِي حَرْثِهِ وَمَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ نَصِيبٍ

20. Whosoever desires the reward of the Hereafter, We give him increase in his reward, and whosoever desires the reward of this world, We give him thereof, and he has no portion in the Hereafter.

The value of man's deeds depend upon his intentions as well as his long term and short term goals. All Rewards shall be granted by God Almighty. Such Rewards shall be granted proportionate to man's intention and choice.

The Arabic word harth indicates earning and acting as it is said fulanun yahrithu li-'ayalihi, i.e. so and so works to earn a living for his family. The agricultural land which is plowed for sowing is figuratively called harth, since benefits will be gained from working on it as farmers plow their land in autumn and sow the seeds such that they reap the crops in summer.

Act is likened to seeds, since they are supposed to be scattered onto the land, penetrate into it, remain there for some time, sprout through sunshine and irrigation, and grow and bear fruit and crops.

Likewise, righteous good deeds are sown in the farmland of man's soul and turn into permanent dispositions of mind through recurrently acting upon them and they will bear fruit in this world and/or the Hereafter. It should be known that any deed will bear fruit whose quality depends on intent and will of the agent.

One who sows the seeds of good deeds in the farmland of his heart and removes the weeds and impurities from it through the hoe of fearing God Almighty and irrigates it with the pure water of faith and devotion aspiring to reap the harvest in the Hereafter, he has done good deeds with perfect faith and devotion.

As God Almighty has said regarding expending in His Cause, He will reward him seven-hundredfold or more. To reap the crops of the good deeds in this world depends upon Divine Mercy and Grace, but it will entail being deprived of the portion of rewards to be granted by God Almighty in the Hereafter.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 21

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ وَلَوْلا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

21. Or have they partners with Allah** [**false deities**] **who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not ordained? And had it not been for a decisive Word** [**as to giving respite to sinners**]**, the matter would have been judged between them** [**through causing their perdition**]**. And verily, for the wrong doers there is an excruciating torment.

Man is in need of Divine Laws and such need may solely be met by God Almighty rather than anyone else. Divine Laws are solely realized through Divine Permission without which it shall be devoid of legitimacy and lawfulness.

Addressing his son, Imam 'Ali (as) says:

"Had your Lord had partners, messengers would have come to you from them."

The blessed Verse in question imparts the same sense:

"Have the partners whom you have associated with God Almighty sent you any religion?"

Concerning Divine respites, Imam Zayn al-'Abidin (as) says:

"O Lord! My recompense for my first sin was Hellfire [*but you granted me respite*]*."*

The blessed Verse is a warning to disbelievers against institution of secular laws together with their satanic associates from amongst jinn and mankind without Divine Permission. Such act is so vicious that had there not been Divine Decree as to giving respites in this world and chastisement in the Hereafter, they would have afflicted Divine torments in this world as well.

There shall be excruciating torments for wrong doers who wrong their own selves and act upon laws besides Divine Laws. The blessed Verse may be applied to our own time in which some people legislate laws against Islamic laws and legislators should know that their wrong act shall entail painful torments.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 22

تَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي رَوْضَاتِ الْجَنَّاتِ لَهُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيرُ

22. You will see** [**on the Day of Resurrection**] **the wrong doers fearful of that which they have

earned and it [chastisement] will surely befall them. But those who believe and do righteous deeds [will be] in the flowering meadows of the Gardens. They shall have whatsoever they desire with their Lord. That is the supreme Grace.

Resurrection is now invisible, but it is as if it is evident. Man's vicious deeds entail nothing other than Hellfire.

Although people of Paradise are believers and do righteous good deeds, but all those Favors are the consequences of Divine Bounties rather than the Rewards of their deeds.

The Arabic word rawda is applied to a place abounding in water and trees. Addressing the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), the blessed Verse says that the Prophet (S) sees wrong doers who are afraid of their acts and are aware of their the viciousness of their deeds, but they do not desist from committing evil deeds.

They are unaware of the fact that they will pay for the evil consequences of their evil deeds, as if their eyes and ears are filled with muddy water hindering them from perceiving the viciousness of their deeds.

"But those who believe and do righteous deeds [will be] in the flowering meadows of the Gardens. They shall have whatsoever they desire with their Lord."

The blessed Verse is explicitly saying that wrong doers' hearts are darkened by the viciousness of their deeds and they pay for the consequences of their sins in this world and the Hereafter; au contraire, committing righteous good deeds has illuminated believers' hearts as if they stroll in the meadows of Paradise and whatever they desire will be provided by their Lord. It is the consequence of their faith and righteous good deeds, but they will be granted the true reward on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 23

ذَلِكَ الَّذِي يُبَشِّرُ اللَّهُ عِبَادَهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ قُلْ لا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْراً إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَى وَمَنْ يَقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَزِدْ لَهُ فِيهَا حُسْناً إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ شَكُورٌ

23. That is [the great Bounty] whereof Allah gives glad tidings to His servants who believe and do righteous good deeds. Say [O Muhammad! Say unto people]: "No reward do I ask of you for this [Divine Call] except to be kind to my close relatives." And whoever earns a good righteous deed, We shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate [the deeds of those obedient to Him].

The preceding Verse treated of the Reward of beneficent believers, e.g. gardens in Paradise and attainment to all desires and Divine Bounties.

The blessed Verse in question is about the Reward of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) who has guided hundreds of millions of people to these Gardens and Bounties. Giving a flower to someone as a gift requires a favor in return, delivering mankind requires a far greater Reward.

It is reflected in the Holy Qur'an that all Prophets said that they did not expect any reward from anyone besides God Almighty, their Lord.

"That" (dhalika)

is a reference to the preceding blessed Verse, saying that the great Bounty promised to God fearing believers is God's glad tiding to His righteous servants as it is also reflected elsewhere[6] in the Holy Qur'an:

"For them are glad tidings, in the life of this world and that of the Hereafter."

In short, these Verses indicate that the perfect believer is happy in this world through the illuminations reflected on his heart at all times as if he is in Paradise.

The occasion of Revelation of the blessed Verses 23-26 is mentioned in Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan as per which it is narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) that when he arrived in Medina, the pillars of the Islamic faith were fortified.

The Helpers (Ansar) said:

"We will go to the Noble Prophet (S) and will tell him if he has financial needs, our property will unconditionally be at your disposal."

When he was informed of their offer, the Verse:

"Tell them that I do not expect any remuneration but the love for my kith and kin"

was revealed.

The Noble Prophet (S) recited the blessed Verse to them and said:

"Love my relatives after my demise."

They left his presence with satisfaction and happiness, but hypocrites accused him of attributing his own claims to God Almighty saying that he expects them to be responsible to his relatives following his demise.

Then the next Verse was revealed:

"Why do you say that he attributed false claims to Allah?"

The Noble Prophet sent for them and recited the Verse to them. Some of them regretted their false claim, grieved, and wept.

Then the third Verse was revealed:

"But He is the One Who accepts the repentance of His servants."

The Noble Prophet (S) sent for them and bore them the glad tiding that their sincere repentance had been accepted by God Almighty.

To express the greatness of this Reward, the blessed Verse in question further adds:

"That is [the great Bounty] whereof Allah gives glad tidings to His servants who believe and do righteous good deeds."

Such glad tidings aim at alleviating the pains of obedience to God Almighty, struggling against concupiscent desires, and jihad against enemies. They also encourage them to proceed with more vigor in vicissitudes and hardships in this life for the attainment of Divine Satisfaction.

Since imparting the Divine Call by the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) led some people to misunderstanding as to his expecting remunerations for the same, he is addressed thus:

"Say: 'I do not expect any reward from you for imparting the Divine Call but to love my relatives.'"

As it will be discussed in details below, love for his relatives alludes to the question of the Divine Guardianship and Leadership of the Infallible Imams (as) as descendants of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S).

It is actually the continuity of the Guardianship of the Noble Prophet (S) whose acknowledgement evidently leads to the happiness of mankind and they shall reap the rewards thereof.

It is worthy of note that Qur'anic exegets raise many a discussion and interpretation regarding the blessed Verse.

Taking an objective glance at such discussions and interpretations reveals that owing to diverse motives they have deviated from the fundamental meaning of the Verse and have opted for possibilities inconsistent with the contextual meaning of the Verse and narrative and historical evidence. All in all, three well-known interpretations have been provided for the Verse in question:

As mentioned above, the term dhawi al-qurba indicates the relatives of the Noble Prophet (S) and love for them may serve as a means of acknowledging the Imamate and leadership of the Infallible Imams (as) as descendants of the Noble Prophet (S) and as a support for imparting the Divine Call.

Some of the earlier exegets and all Shi'i ones have opted for the meaning in question and many a

tradition have been narrated by Shi'i and Sunni scholars in this vein which will be mentioned below.

The blessed Verse intends to say that the Reward of Prophethood is to favor the affairs which call man unto nearness to God Almighty.

The interpretation opted by some of Sunni exegets is by no means consistent with the literal meaning of the Verse since taking this interpretations into account, the Verse would mean:

"I ask you to love obedience to God Almighty and develop a liking for it,"

whereas it is supposed to say that I expect you to obey God Almighty rather than love for God. Furthermore, there was not a single person among the audience of the Verse who did not want to come closer to God, even polytheists were interested to approach God and they principally regarded idolatry as a means of the same.

The Verse intends to say that you have your relatives as the reward of Prophethood. Take care of your blood relatives. This interpretation is quite inconsistent with the Prophetic Call and its Reward, since loving one's relatives has nothing to do with assisting the Noble Prophet (S) and it may not be regarded as the Reward for imparting his Prophetic Call.

Now, the best way to further familiarize ourselves with the true contextual meaning of the Verse is to take into account other Qur'anic Verses.

It is reflected in many a Qur'anic Verse that Prophets expected no remuneration from people for imparting the Divine Message, but they solely expected God Almighty to Reward them. There are different interpretations about the Noble Prophet's (S) Reward. Mention is made of the Reward elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an, for instance,

"Say [O Muhammad!]: 'Whatever reward I might have asked of you is ours. My Reward is from Allah only, and He is a Witness over all things'"*[7]*;
"Say [O Muhammad!]: 'I expect no reward from you for imparting the Divine Call unless from those who want to take the Path toward their Lord'";
***"Say [O Muhammad!]: 'No reward do I ask of you for this [the Prophetic Call], nor am I one of those who impose anything on you'"*[8].**

Taking into account the three Verses and the One in question, we may easily make a conclusion: expectation of remuneration is totally negated in one of the Verses, but another says:

"unless from those who want to take the Path toward their Lord."

The third Verse says:

"The reward which I have asked from you is for your own selves."

Finally, the blessed Verse in question says:

“Loving [*my*] *close relatives is the reward of my Prophetic Call,”*

in other words, what he expects have the following characteristics: He is not supposed to reap the fruits of such love but such love paves their path toward God Almighty.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the continuity of the Prophetic doctrine by the Divine Guardians who are his Infallible successors and descendants.

The question of loving them serves as the basis of the nexus which is explicitly mentioned in the Verse.

It would be of interest to say that besides the Verse in question, the word:

close relatives **(*qurba*)**

is attested fifteen times in the Holy Qur’an, but it is not known why some people insist that the word in this context designates “closeness to Allah” and thereby turn away from the denotative meaning as attested throughout the Holy Qur’an.

It is also noteworthy that the Verse further adds:

“And whoever earns a good righteous deed, We shall give him an increase of good in respect thereof. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Ready to appreciate [***the deeds of those obedient to Him***]***.”***

The most exalted excellence for man is to obey Divine leaders, love them, proceed on their path, inquire about ambiguous issues and ask for their expositions, regard their deeds as the standards of his own, and set their manners as his models.

The aforesaid interpretation is substantiated by many a Prophetic tradition attested in Sunni and Shi’i sources which all indicate that the phrase

“close relatives”

is applied to his Ahl al-Bayt and his kith and kin, instances of which include:

In his Fada’il al-Sahaba, Ahmad narrates thus on the authority of Sa’id ibn Jubayr who in turn narrates from ‘Amir:

“When the Verse

‘Say [***O Muhammad! Say unto people***]***: ‘No reward do I ask of you for this*** [***Divine Call***] ***except to be kind to my close relatives’***

was revealed, the Companions of the Prophet (S) said unto him:

'O Messenger of Allah! Who are your relatives whose love is incumbent upon us?'

He replied:

'Ali and Fatima and their two sons (as).'

He reiterated the sentence thrice."[9]

It is narrated from Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (as) in Mustadrak al-Sahihayn that when Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful (as), was martyred, Hasan ibn 'Ali delivered a sermon, in which he said:

"I am from a family whose love is incumbent upon all Muslims by God Almighty and He said unto His Prophet (as):

'Say [O Muhammad! Say unto people]: 'No reward do I ask of you for this [Divine Call] except to be kind to my close relatives.'

Acquisition of the good is a reference to being kind to Ahl al-Bayt."[10]

In his Durr al-Manthur under the Verse in question, Suyuti narrates from Mujahid who in turn narrates from Ibn 'Abbas that the Noble Prophet was asked as to the interpretation of the Verse:

"No reward do I ask of you for this [Divine Call] except to be kind to my close relatives"

and he replied:

"It means to say that preserve my right regarding my Ahl al-Bayt and be kind to them because of me."[11]

Thus it becomes evident that what is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas by others in a different manner as per which the Noble Prophet's (S) safety had been due to his relation to different Arab tribes is not certain since as mentioned above, counter-traditions have been narrated from Ibn 'Abbas.

In his Tafsir ("Exegesis"), Ibn Jarir Tabari narrates on the authorities of Sa'id ibn Jubayr and 'Umar ibn Shu'ayb that the Verse in question indicates the relatives of the Prophet (S).[12]

Quoting Hakim Haskani's (a well-known Sunni exeget and traditionist) Shawahid al-Tanzil, Tabarsi narrates from Abi Umama Bahili that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) said:

"God Almighty created Prophets from different trees, but He has created me and 'Ali (as) from the same tree. I am the trunk and 'Ali is the branch of the tree and Fatima (as) causes the tree to thrive and Hasan and Husayn (as) are the fruits thereof and the Shi'i, our followers, are its leaves...

Even if someone worships God Almighty between Safa and Marwa for three thousand years such that

he will be likened to an old water skin but he fails to love us, God Almighty will cast him on his face onto the Fire."

Then the Noble Prophet (S) recited the Verse:

"No reward do I ask of you for this* [*Divine Call*] *except to be kind to my close relatives."

It is worthy of note that the tradition was so well-known that the famous poet, Kumayt, alludes to it:

"We have found for you (*the Family of the Noble Prophet*) *a Verse in HM Chapters which is interpreted by those who conceal their beliefs out of discretion in duress and it is explicitly expressed by those who evidently express their beliefs."*13

Thus quotes Suyuti in al-Durr al-Manthur from Ibn Jarir who in his turn narrates on the authority of Abi Daylam:

"When 'Ali ibn al-Husayn was captured and held at the gate of Damascus, a certain man from Sham said:

"God bless that He killed and eradicated you."

'Ali ibn Husayn replied:

"Have you read the Qur'an?"

He said:

"Yes."

'Ali ibn Husayn inquired:

"Have you read the Chapter HM?"

He said:

"No."

'Ali asked him:

"Have you not read the Verse:

'No reward do I ask of you for this* [*Divine Call*] *except to be kind to my close relatives?'"

The man asked:

"Are you the ones referred to in the Verse?"

‘Ali replied:

“Yes.”[14]

In his Kashshaf, Zamakhshari quotes a tradition which is also cited on his authority by Fakhr Razi and Qurtubi in their exegetic works. The tradition explicitly expresses the excellence of the family of the Prophet (S) and the significance of the love for them, saying:

“The Messenger of Allah (S) said:

“One who passes away with the love of the family of Muhammad (S) is a martyr. Beware that such person passes away with repentance.

Beware that he passes away as a perfect believer. Beware that when he dies, the angel of death bears glad tidings to the people of Paradise and the angels in charge of questioning the deceased in purgatory bear him glad tidings.

Beware that such person will be taken to Paradise with respect such that a bride is taken to the bridegroom. Beware that two gates will be opened in his grave to Paradise. Beware that his grave shall be the place of worship for the angels of Mercy.

Beware that such person passes away according to the practice of the Muslim community. Beware that one who passes away with enmity against the family of the Prophet (S) will enter the desert of Resurrection with a sign on his forehead which reads:

‘Disappointed from Divine Mercy.’

Beware that one who passes away with a grudge against the family of the Prophet (S) dies as a disbeliever. Beware that such person will not smell the fragrance of Paradise.”[15]

It is worthy of note that that citing the tradition also quoted by the author of Kashshaf, Zamakhshari, Fakhr Razi further adds:

“The family of the Prophet (S) are those to whom they shall return, those people whose relationship is firmer and more perfect are regarded as the ‘family’ and it is evident that Fatima, ‘Ali, Hasan, and Husayn (as) had the firmest relationship with the Messenger of Allah (S).

This fact is substantiated by consecutively transmitted traditions. Thus it is incumbent upon us to call them as the family of the Prophet (S). Some people have different opinions regarding the meaning of ‘family’ (al). Some regard them as the close relatives of the Prophet (S) and some maintain that they are the Noble Prophet’s (S) community.

If we take the former meaning as preferable the term exclusively refers to them, but if we take it as indicating those who acknowledged his Prophetic Call, the close relatives of the Messenger of God (S)

are still regarded as his family. Therefore, in any case, they are the family of the Prophet (S), but there are differences of opinion as to the inclusion of people other than them."

Then Fakhr Razi proceeds to quote from Zamakhshari's Kashshaf:

"When the Verse was revealed, the Noble Prophet (S) was asked:

'O Messenger of God! Who are your relatives whose love is incumbent upon us?'

He replied:

"Ali, Fatima, and their two sons (as).'

Now it is evident that these four persons are the Noble Prophet's (S) close relatives and it behoves Muslims to pay deed respect to them."

Fakhr Razi further adds that there are different arguments substantiating the question:

The aforesaid clause:

"except to be kind to my close relatives"

whose manner of argumentation was discussed above.

The Noble Prophet (S) indubitably loved Fatima (as) and regarding whom he said:

"Fatima is a part of my body, what hurts her, hurts me."

According to consecutively transmitted traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet (S), he loved 'Ali, Hasan, and Husayn (as) which makes it incumbent upon all Muslims to love them, since the following Qur'anic Verses explicitly indicate the same:

"Follow him so that you may be guided"*[16]*;
"And let those who oppose his commandments beware of Divine torment*[17]*;
"Say [O Muhammad!]: "If you love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins"*[18]*;
"Verily in the Messenger of Allah (S) you have a good example to follow*[19]*."

It would be a great honor to pray for the family (al), thereby the tashahhud part of daily prayers devoted to the invocation of Divine Presence closes with:

"O God! Bless Muhammad and his family, forgive Muhammad and his family."

Such honor is unprecedented for people besides the Noble Prophet's (S) family. Thus, the aforesaid arguments indicate that it is incumbent upon Muslims to love the Noble Prophet's (S) family.

Finally, Fakhr Razi closes his discussion on the same with the well-known lines by Shafi'i:

O rider heading to pilgrimage to Mecca

/ In a place close to Mina, the great centre for pilgrims' assembly, where rocks are gathered for symbolic lapidation of Satan (*ramy jamara*)

/ Stand and call unto all those praying at Khayf Mosque or are moving around,

/ Cry out at daybreak when pilgrims depart from Mash'ar toward Mina and flow like an immense and roaring river into the land of Mina

/ Call unto them that if the love for the family of the Noble Prophet (*S*) *is heresy and apostasy, all jinn and mankind will bear witness that I am a heretic and an apostate.*[20]

Thus is the exalted state of the family of the Noble Prophet (S) whom we ask to intercede with God Almighty on our behalf and whom we regard as our leaders and guides in matters of religion in this world and as our models in life. We regard their Imamate as the continuity of the Prophetic Call.

It is worthy of note that in addition to the aforesaid traditions, there are many other traditions mentioned in Islamic sources concerning the same issue; however, owing to concision and making solely mention of exegetic dimensions, mention was made above of seven traditions.

It is also noteworthy that the tradition in question is attested in theological sources, e.g. Ihqaq al-Haqq and its detailed commentary and also in approximately fifty Sunni sources. Such attestation explicitly bears witness to the prevalence of the tradition in Sunni as well as Shi'i sources.

In terms of traditions, Shi'i and Sunni sources unanimously reveal that the blessed Verse in question is revealed concerning the Noble Prophet's (S) family (Ahl al-Bayt) loving them is obligatory and enmity against them is forbidden.

Now, mention will be made of the Sunni sources regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question and the obligation of loving the Noble Prophet's (S) family: Bukhari's Sahih, section six concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question; Muslim's Sahih, section five regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question; Tirmidhi's Sahih, vol. 2, p. 308; Hilyat al-Awliya', vol. 3, p. 201; Kifayat al-Talib, chapter 11, p. 90; Musnad al-Sahaba, section 10, p. 71; Mu'jam al-Kabir, vol. 1, p. 125; Fada'il Ibn Hanbal, tradition 263; Ghayat al-Maram, chapter 5, p. 306; Ibn Maghazili's Manaqib, tradition 355; Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 9, p. 168; Tafsir Kashshaf, vol. 2, p. 339; Dhakha'ir al-'Uqba', p. 25; Sawa'q, p. 101; Ibn 'Asakir, no. 181, Ta'rikh Dimashq, vol. 37, p. 43; Lisan al-Mizan, vol. 4, p. 434; Ta'rikh Isbahan, vol. 2, p. 165; Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 1, p. 208; Fara'id al-Simtayn, chapter 26, simt 2, tradition 425; Maqatil al-Talibiyin, p. 50; Tafsir Furat, p.70; Taysir al-Matalib, p. 120; Ansab al-Ashraf, vol. 2, p. 79; Tafsir Tabari, vol. 25, p. 25; Usd al-Ghaba, vol. 5, p. 367; Ta'rikh Baghdad, vol. 2, p. 146; al-Durr al-Manthur, under the blessed Verse in question; Majma' al-Zawa'id, vol. 9, p. 172; Kunuz al-Haqa'iq, vol.

5, Dhakha'ir al-'Uqba, p. 18; Nur al-Absar, p. 103.

To sum up, all Sunnis and Shi'is, friends and foes, are unanimous in saying that it is incumbent upon all Muslims to love and support the Noble Prophet's (S) family and his descendents.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 24

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِباً فَإِنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ وَيَمْحُ اللَّهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

***24. Or say they: "He has invented a lie against Allah?" If Allah willed, He could have sealed up your heart. And Allah wipes out falsehood and establishes the truth by His Word. Verily, He knows well what* [*secrets*] *are in the breasts* [*of men*].**

Regarding the question of Prophetic Call disbelievers and heretics said that the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) was a man like them and his Prophetic Call was an accusation against God Almighty; likewise they voiced the same accusation regarding the question of Imamate.

Those who did not intend to regard the love for Ahl al-Bayt as a Prophetic Call said:

"Muhammad invents lies against God by saying that his reward is that people love his next of kin."

The blessed Verse in question is saying had the Messenger (S) invented a lie against Allah, He would vent His Wrath upon him by sealing up his heart.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question resumes the subject matter of the preceding Verses concerning Prophetic Call and the Reward thereof, love for his next of kin and the Ahl al-Bayt.

In this vein, the blessed Verse is saying that they do not acknowledge Divine Revelation, but say that He invents lies against God and his words are the fruits of his imagination:

(***"If Allah willed, He could have sealed up your heart"***).

The blessed Verse is in fact an allusion to the well-known logical argument as per which if someone claims to be the Prophet and works miracles and signs and is supported by God, but invents lies against Him, Divine Wisdom will necessitate that the miracles and His Support be taken away and he will be disgraced as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[21]:

***"And if he had forged a false saying concerning Us, We surely would have seized him by his right hand* [*and would have cut the vessel of his heart*]."**

It is also noteworthy that one of the false accusations made by disbelievers and polytheists was that they

said that he had regarded the love for his kith and kin as the reward for his Prophetic Call and had thus forged a false saying concerning God. Taking into account the preceding Verses, the blessed Verse in question rejects such false claim.

However, the contextual meaning of the blessed Verse is not restricted to this sense, since the Holy Qur'an reveals that the enemies of the Noble Prophet (S) forged the same false claim as to the entirety of the Holy Qur'an as Divine Revelation, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an[22]:

"Or do they say: 'He [***Muhammad*** (***S***)] ***has forged it?' Say: 'Bring then a Chapter like unto it and call upon whomsoever you can besides Allah, if you are truthful.'"***

The following Verse also puts further emphasis on the same:

"Allah effaces falsehood"[23].

It rests with God Almighty to disgrace falsehood and make truth appear. Thus, He never allows anyone to forge a lie against Him and render him assistance and allow him to make miracles at the same time.

It is not imaginable that the Noble Prophet (S) was able to forge a lie against God Almighty without His being Aware of the same, since:

"He is All-Aware of the secrets in breasts."

As mentioned above under the exegesis of 35:38, the word dhat is not employed in the Arabic tongue in the sense of essence and truth of things, but it is a philosophical term.[24]

The point is that the word is used in the sense of

"possessor, having."

Thus, the meaning of the last Verse[25] is that God Almighty is All-Aware of the thoughts and beliefs predominating hearts since He is the Possessor of the same. It is a delicate allusion to predominance of thought over the hearts and souls of mankind.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 25

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَقْبَلُ التَّوبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَعْفُو عَنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَفْعَلُونَ

25. And He it is the One Who accepts repentance from His servants, and forgives sins, and He knows what you do.

It solely rests with God Almighty to accept the repentance of His servants and forgive their sins. There are no deadlocks in Islam and the path of return is open at all times.

God Almighty forgives all sins, but repentance is supposed to accompany change of words and attitudes unless it would be a kind of dissimulation and hypocrisy known by God Almighty.

Since God Almighty leaves the path of return open at all times to His servants, following reproaches as to sinners' and polytheists' vicious deeds, the Holy Qur'an repeatedly makes reference to the path of repentance at all times and adds:

"He is the One Who accepts repentance from His servants and forgives sins."

The point is that if man pretends repentance but keeps on committing vicious deeds, he should know that nothing is concealed from Divine Omniscience, since

"He knows what you do."

It was mentioned above that following the Revelation of the Verse of loving Prophet's (S) family, some hypocrites and those of frail faith said that Muhammad (S) had invented a lie against God intending to belittle them before his kith and kin following which the Verse:

"He has invented a lie against Allah?" If Allah willed, He could have sealed up your heart"

was revealed; as a consequence of which some of them regretted their words, grieved, and wept. Thus, the blessed Verse in question was revealed to bear them glad tidings that if they sincerely repent, God Almighty will forgive their sin.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 26

وَيَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالْكَافِرُونَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ

26. And He answers [the invocations of] those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and gives them increase of His Bounty. And as for the disbelievers, theirs will be a severe torment.

God Almighty answers the invocations of those who believe and do righteous good deeds. It is worthy of note, however, that answering their invocations depends upon faith and doing righteous good deeds.

Thus it is said in the blessed Verse in question:

"And He answers [the invocations of] those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and gives them increase of His Bounty. And as for the disbelievers, theirs will be a severe torment."

Taking into account the blessed Verse

"Invoke Me and I shall answer your invocations"

encompassing all men, it becomes apparent that answering invocations is solely restricted to believers. One whose heart is enlightened through faith and monotheism and obeys Divine Commands, God Almighty turns to him and answers his prayers.

It is reflected in traditions that one who approaches God Almighty one span, He will approach him one cubit:

(*"One who is for God, God is for him"*).

Finally, mention will be made of two traditions. Regarding the invocation in question, Imam Baqir (as) says:

"A believer's invocation for his brother in faith shall be answered by God Almighty, since He will say that owing to his love for his brother in faith, the invoker and the one for who he invokes will be granted what they require."[26]

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that:

"gives them increase of His Bounty"

makes a reference to the right of believers interceding with God Almighty on behalf of others.[27]

1. Majma' al-Bayan, opening of the Chapter in question.
2. 40-46
3. 4:59
4. 15:21
5. Tafsir al-Mizan.
6. 10:64
7. 34:47
8. 38:86
9. Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, p. 2. Qurtubi also cites the tradition under the Verse in question (vol. 8, p. 5843).
10. Mustadrak al-Sahihayn, vol. 3, p. 2. Muhibb al-Din Óabari in Dhakha'ir (p. 37) and Ibn Hajar in his Sawa'iq (p. 101) have also cited the tradition.
11. al-Durr al-Manthur, under the Verse in question, vol. 6, p. 7.
12. Tafsir Óarabi, vol. 25, pp. 16-17.
13. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 29.
14. al-Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 7.
15. Tafsir Kashshaf, vol. 4, pp. 220-221; Fakhr Razi, vol. 27, pp. 165-166; Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5843. Tafsir Tha'labi, under the blessed Verse in question, apud al-Muraja'at, no. 19.
16. 7:158
17. 24:63
18. 3:31
19. 33:21
20. The Tafsir by Fakhr Razi, vol. 27, p. 166.
21. 69:44-46
22. 10:38
23. 17:11

24. Raghib's Mufradat.
25. 35:38
26. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
27. Majma' al-Bayan; Nur al-Thiqalayn.

Surah al-Shura, Verses 27 - 53

Surah al-Shura - Verse 27

وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللَّهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهِ لَبَغَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنْ يُنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ بِعِبَادِهِ خَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ

27. And if Allah were to enlarge the provision for His servants, they would surely rebel in the earth, but He sends down by measure as He wills. Truly! He is in respect of His servants the Well-Aware, the All-Seer.

In the same manner that Divine Bounties are His Favors, depravations are at times Divine Favors. In the same vein, enlarging provision for servants leads at times to their neglect, rebellion, and exceeding limits.

Many a servant have trodden the way to perdition owing to mundane possessions. as sending down provision by measure impedes corruption, enlarging the same and granting respites to the affluent serve as trials.

Thus provision is measured as per a general rule, but man's provision may be enlarged as a means of trial.[1]

Thus, the blessed Verse in question guides believers saying that they should not be saddened by the restriction of their provision, since they are supposed to know that their interest lies in the same and it is preordained by Divine Will and Wisdom that some should have access to less means, since the increase in their provision will lead to the disobedience of the concupiscent soul whetting their vain desires for mundane possessions and making them veer off the path of Divine Law.

Poverty is one of the means of making man approach God Almighty, since the poor believe in the measurement of Divine provision and they are at all times preoccupied by the same and turn to Him and seek their provision from Him.

Au contraire, worldly possessions and affluence may preoccupy man with attending to concupiscent desires and he is thus made remote from the Truth, since God Almighty is All-Aware of the affairs of His

servants.

He restricts the provision and enlarges the same through His Divine Wisdom. It is worthy of note that healthful social relations are prerequisites for rational and well measured life style. Divine Bounties are granted as per Divine Wisdom and Discretion rather than human desires.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 28

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهُ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

28. And He it is Who sends down the rain after they have despaired and spreads His Mercy. And He is the Protector, Worthy of all praise.

Rain is a manifestation of Divine Mercy and decrease in the amount of rain impedes man's disobedience.

The Arabic word ghayth is applied to fruitful rain whereas the word matar designates any kind of rain, fruitful or harmful, as it is reflected elsewhere[2] in the Holy Qur'an:

"And indeed they have passed by the town [***of Prophet Lot*** (***as***)] ***on which was rained the evil rain."***

The blessed Verse in question says that one of the Signs of Divine Bounty and Mercy is that you were desperate at the time of famine, but He sent down rain for you and distributed His Mercy so that your provision may be enlarged and your trees and crops may thrive. He is you Friend whom you are supposed to obey in return for His Bounties and you are supposed to praise your Lord.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 29

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ

29. And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and whatever moving [***living***] ***creatures He has dispersed in them both. And He is Omnipotent over their assembling whenever He wills.***

Creation of the heavens, the earth, and moving living creatures is one of Divine Signs. All creatures in the heavens, on the earth, and those in between them from inanimate beings, plants, and animals dispersed in them are all Signs of the Existence of the Necessary Existent Being and the Most Beauteous Names indicating His Omniscience, Omnipotence, Will, Unity, and so on serve as Attributes of the Glory and Beauty of the Creator and the Provider of the world, since we may know the Originator

of creation through such intelligible and praise and worship the Lord.

The word dabba may indicate animals and mankind that will be assembled on the Day of Resurrection and the prepositional phrase:

fihi-ma (*"whatever in them both"*)

may include all creatures in the heavens as well, like angels and other creatures whose knowledge of existence rests with God Almighty.

All these creatures existing between the heavens and the earth shall be assembled on the Day of Resurrection through Divine Will.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 30

وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

30. And whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He pardons many [***of your sins***]***.***

There exists a nexus between man's conduct and the vicissitudes of life;

(***"And whatever of misfortune befalls you"***).

His problems are the consequences of some of his vicious deeds rather than all of them, since God Almighty forgives many sins committed by man;

(***"And He pardons many*** [***of your sins"***).

The blessed Verse is a warning to sinners that whatever hardship or misfortune befalling on them is the consequence of their deeds.

It is a reference to the fact that vicious deeds breed undesirable consequences which are different from the recompense of wrong doing to inferiors whose venomous fruits are reaped in a brief period of time, as it is imagined by the short-sighted that the recompense to which sinners are warned is not solely restricted to their recompense in this world but it is far less than the one to be measured at the Divine Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection.

"And He pardons many [***of your sins***]***"***

indicates that many a sin will be forgiven by God Almighty since He is the Glorious, of permanent Bounties, and Pre-Eternal of Beneficence (qadim al-ihsan), such that He pardons many a sin committed in a number of years with one single repentance.

It should not be imagined that whoever is afflicted with some affliction or hardship is paying for his evil deeds, since the blessed Verse in question addresses sinners who are afflicted by misfortunes as the consequences of their sins.

It is even out of Divine Mercy that worldly afflictions alleviate their torments in the Hereafter. According to a Prophetic tradition narrated on the authority of Imam 'Ali (as), the Messenger of God (S) is reported as saying:

"It is the best of Verses revealed in the Divine Book. O 'Ali (as), there is no scratch nor falling down unless it is the consequence of committing sins and God is Greater than chastising those who have committed sins in this world but they were forgiven by Him. He is so Just that He never again chastises sinners who have been chastised in this world."[3]

It is however worthy of note that the infallible Prophets and Imams (as) suffer from afflictions in this world and thereby their exalted state shall be promoted and such afflictions are not the consequences of their evil deeds.

In this vein, the blessed Imam (as) is quoted as saying as per a tradition cited in the book titled Wafi, the Chapter on believers' afflictions, that the more believer's faith grows, the more his afflictions will be. Thus, whoever is nearer to God Almighty is afflicted with more afflictions.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 31

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

31. And you cannot escape from Allah** [and leave His Dominance] **in the earth and besides Allah you have neither any protector nor any helper.

Man pays for the consequences of his evil deeds but he may not harm God Almighty in the least. The motive behind many a vicious deed is to seek protectors and helpers, but the truth is that God Almighty is the true Protector.

The blessed Verse is an objection raised against polytheists and disbelievers warning them that they are not supposed to be able to escape from God Almighty and leave His Dominance through their evil deeds and words.

The blessed Verse aims at encouraging worship and obedience to God Almighty and discouraging disobedience saying that it is solely God Almighty Who is Able to ward off torment and He is the only Protector Who grants Succor.[4]

Surah al-Shura - Verses 32 - 33

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلامِ

إِنْ يَشَأْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ عَلَى ظَهْرِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ

32. And among His Signs [***of Omnipotence***] ***are the ships*** [***sailing***] ***in the sea like mountains.***
33. If He wills, He causes the wind to cease, then they would become motionless on the back [***of the sea***]. ***Truly, in this are Signs*** [***of Divine Omnipotence***] ***for everyone patient and grateful.***

The Arabic word al-jawar is the plural form of jariya designating a sailing ship and the phrase ka-al-a'lam indicates colossal ships or moving icebergs. The role played by wind in nature is also noteworthy.

Respiration of living beings, movement of ships and clouds, pollination of plants, and modification of cold and heat all depend upon blowing of wind and it is one of the sources of energy in modern times.

The word ***sabbar*** is attested four times in the Holy Qur'an all instances of which are followed by the word:

shakur (***"grateful"***).

Such coincidence bears testimony to the fact that they play a significant role together. It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) that faith has two branches: patience and gratitude.5

The blessed Verses in question are saying that Divine Signs of Omnipotence and Mercy include the ships as tall as mountains sailing in the seas but if the wind does not blow upon Divine Will, no one will be able to move such colossal ships in the sea.

Ships sailed in seas in former times, so if the wind blew gently and the sea happened to be calm, ships could easily reach their destinations. Nonetheless, it was quite perilous for ships to sail in stormy seas in thunder and lightning. If there was no wind, ships would stay still in water.

As a consequence, the blessed Verse reminds men that they are all Divine Signs of Omnipotence and whenever He wills, the wind blows gently and ships with their passengers and their possessions reach destinations safely;

(***"Truly, in this are Signs*** [***of Divine Omnipotence***] ***for everyone patient and grateful"***).

How similar is mundane life to a ship in water. The sea is agitated at times and man is perplexed and entangled with vicissitudes and at times, it is stagnant and man is perplexed as what to do. At times, Divine Mercy is granted on him and he finds serenity.

It is as if it serves as a reminder reminding men that these are Divine Signs of Omnipotence. He makes the wind blow whenever He wills. It may be likened to man's life wherein at times he is perplexed when he finds everything stagnant and wonders as what measure to take. At times Divine Mercy is granted to him and he finds serenity.

The blessed Verses evidently guide those whose inner eyes have opened and they see these alterations in Divine Signs of Omnipotence providing them with the admonition that they are supposed to be quite patient, tolerant, and grateful in the face of ups and down.

Such people benefit from what happens to them and they will be rescued from the sea of perplexity, since they know that what is preordained for them is through Divine Wisdom. Those who are submerged in the agitated sea of concupiscent desires will be drowned unless Divine Mercy rescue them from the abyss of the world and guide them to the shore of deliverance.

Surah al-Shura - Verses 34 - 35

أَوْ يُوبِقْهُنَّ بِمَا كَسَبُوا وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيرٍ

وَيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مَحِيصٍ

34. Or He may destroy them [***the ships***] ***because of that which their*** [***owners***] ***have earned. And He pardons many*** [***people and does not drown them***].
35. And those who dispute as regards Our Ayat [***Signs, Verses***] ***may know that there is no place of refuge for them.***

The verbal form:

(***"He destroys them"***)

derives from the root w-b-q ("destroy") and it is ad hoc employed in the sense of "drown." The word ***mahis***, deriving from h-'-s ("flee, escape"), designates "way of return and deliverance."

To depict Divine Glory, the blessed Verses in question further add:

"Or He may destroy them [***the ships***] ***because of that which their*** [***owners***] ***have earned."***

As it was reflected in the preceding Verses, human afflictions are often the consequences of his own deeds; however, man finds Divine Mercy;

"and He pardons many [***people***]***."***

If He does not grant His Mercy, no one besides the Infallible Prophets and Imams and also those pure and sincere at heart may not stay away from Divine Chastisement, as it is reflected elsewhere6 in the Holy Qur'an:

"And if Allah were to punish men for that which they earned, He would not leave a living being on the face of the earth, but He grants them respite to an appointed time and when their term comes, indeed Allah is the All-Seer of His servants."

God Almighty is Omnipotent and may impede winds from blowing so that ships stay standstill in the heart of oceans and He is All-Able to turn winds into severe storms to crush colossal ships and roll them on gigantic waves, but His All-Inclusive Mercy impedes the same.

Verse 35 says:

"And those who dispute** [**and rise in denial**] **as regards Our Ayat** [**Signs, Verses**] **may know that there is no place of refuge for them** [**but Divine Pure Essence**]**."

Such people may not be granted Divine Forgiving, since they willfully rise against him and persist in their enmity and obduracy. They are deprived of His emanating fountainhead of Forgiving and Mercy and may not find deliverance from His torment.

As mentioned above, the word ***mahis***, deriving from h-'-s ("flee, escape"), designates "way of return and deliverance." The word mahis denotes place and is employed in the sense of place of refuge.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 36

فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

36. So whatever you have been given is but** [**a transient**] **enjoyment for this worldly life, but that which is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord.

The preceding Verses treated of disputes and the blessed Verse in question evidently reveals that disputes spring from attachment to this worldly life which is not more than a transient enjoyment.

However, it is worthy of note that the blessed Verse addresses mankind saying that whatever God Almighty gives them from worldly possessions, knowledge, and other things is to benefit from this world.

In other words, man is granted Bounties so as to proceed on the path of betterment, but whatever is with God Almighty, e.g. otherworldly Bounties, true knowledge, and everlasting life, is far better and intransient for those who regard God Almighty, their Lord and Provider, as their refuge and rely on His

Grace.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 37

وَالَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبَائِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَإِذَا مَا غَضِبُوا هُمْ يَغْفِرُونَ

37. And those who avoid the grave sins and vicious deeds, and when they are angry, forgive.

The preceding Verse treated of faith and putting one's trust in God Almighty both of which are attached to the heart. The blessed Verse in question treats of believers' practical strategies.

What are grave sins (kaba'ir al-ithm)? In his Tahrir al-Wasila, Imam Khomeini (May God Almighty sanctify his noble spirit) in discussing the qualifications of the Imam leading a congregational prayer states that it is incumbent upon such Imam to abstain from committing grave sins which include any sin for committing which the Holy Qur'an promises torment, or those against which there are strict injunctions, or those for which there exist arguments bearing testimony to the fact that they are on a par with or worse than grave sins, or the ones which are deemed as such by intellection, or those regarded as such by the common run of believers, or there exists certain reason to regard them likewise.

Then, he proceeds to enumerate a number of instances, including:

1. Despair of Divine Mercy

2. Forging lies against Allah and His Noble Prophet (S)

3. Homicide and fornication

4. Accusing a married woman of a groundless imputation

5. Desertion at the time of war

6. Being cursed and disinherited by one's parents

7. Breaking off all relations with relatives

8. Practicing magic

9. Fornication

10. Sodomy

11. Transgressing the rights of the orphan

12. Withholding truth

13. Bearing false testimony

14. Breaking one’s promise

15. Drinking alcoholic drinks

16. Overstepping the stipulations of a will

17. Usury

18. Gambling

19. Stinting or scrimping in selling something

20. Consumption of pork and corpse

21. Bearing wrong-doers assistance and relying on them

22. Extravagance and prodigality

23. Withholding people’s rights

24. Forging lies

25. Arrogance

26. Treachery and disloyalty

27. Backbiting

28. Underestimation of the excellence of pilgrimage to Mecca

30. Failing to establish of daily prayers

31. Withholding religious alms tax (zakat)

32. Persistence in committing lesser sins

33. Preoccupation with libidinous pleasures

34. Associating partners to God Almighty

35. Theft

36. Consumption of blood

37. Consumption of corpse

38. Consumption of the meat of an animal at whose slaughter the Name of God Almighty was not uttered or the one slaughtered by non-Muslims

39. Bearing false testimony

40. Feeling safe against Divine Scheme

41. Bearing wrong-doers assistance

42. Perjury

43. Fraudulence in transactions and entertaining hatred and stealing from the war booty before its distribution

44. Waging war against favorites of God Almighty

The blessed Verse in question treats of the exalted states of those who believe in God Almighty and put their trust in their Lord knowing that what is provided for them with their Lord is far better and enduring than the limited material possessions with which disbelievers are provided.

It is also worthy of note that it is an attribute of believers that they abstain from committing grave sins and vicious deeds and forgive others when they are in a rage against them.

Surah al-Shura - Verses 38 - 39

وَالَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُونَ

38. And those who answer the Call of their Lord, establish prayers, [***conduct***] ***their affairs by consultation, and expend of what We have bestowed upon them.***
39. And those who when an oppressive wrong is done to them [***do not surrender but***] ***seek succor.***

Attending to Divine Lordship enthuses man to act upon Divine Injunctions. Those who love establishing prayers and expending in the Cause of Allah shall reap better and enduring Bounties in the Hereafter.

Talha and Zubayr said unto Imam 'Ali (as):

"We support you provided that you seek our consultation regarding all issues, since we are different from others."

The Noble Imam (as) replied:

"I look into the Book of Allah and Prophetic traditions and act upon them. I have no need for your consultation in this respect; however if I come to issues for which I could not find any argument thereto and feel the need to seek your consultation, I will do likewise."

Verse 38 lays emphasis on consultation in the administration of society hence the designation of the Chapter, Shura ("consultation"). A number of traditions will be cited hereunder regarding consultation.[7]

"Consult with pious scholars, those who fear God Almighty who prefer the Hereafter to worldly possessions. Consult with the wise who are knowledgeable and experienced. Do not consult with the avaricious, the timid, and the greedy.

Consult with those who are truthful and have no attachments. Reveal your secrets unto them so that they may present their comprehensive and complete opinions. Consultation with the benevolent wise leads to growth and Divine Blessing. Regarding your affairs, consult with one who possesses five excellences: sensibility, knowledge, experience, benevolence, and fear of God Almighty."[8]

It is worthy of note that one is supposed to seek consultation regarding the affairs of people, but one is not supposed to do likewise concerning Divine matters, e.g. Resurrection, Imamate, and worship of God. Establishment of prayers is a Divine Covenant and believers are supposed to keep their promise without seeking consultation.

Imamate and leading the Muslim community are also Divine Covenants, since Abraham (as) invoked God Almighty and asked Him to appoint his offspring to lead the community and God Almighty answered to him:

"Leadership and Imamate are My Covenants and appointment of individuals to the same is dependent upon My Will rather than your invocation, since wrong-doers do not deserve leadership."

Thus, we should surrender to Him in terms of the leadership of the Muslim community, as it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an,

"Indeed, I appoint you as the leader of people."

Imamate depends upon Divine Will, but consultation regards people's social affairs rather than Injunctions and Divine Laws. It is noteworthy that that Islam is a comprehensive and complete religion in terms of ideological, ethical, social, economic, religious, and political issues. The present tense indicating progression is employed to express such characteristics.[9]

Other characteristics of those who believe in God and in Whom they put their trust is that they act upon Divine Injunctions and establish prayers. In establishing their prayers, they seriously observe the outward aspects, e.g. the order of their parts and conditions, and the inward aspects, e.g. sincerity and

presence of mind and all the affairs that lead to the acceptance of their acts by God Almighty.

Believers also consult with each other and act upon each other's discretion. They do not act opinionatedly. Consultation is fruitful in consulting with the wise and scholars since it leads to favorable consequences.

Besides, it breeds friendship amongst believers, since they trust each other in their secrets, keep company with them, and seek their own good from them. Furthermore, believers provide others with the material possession, knowledge, recognition, and rank which are all granted to them by God Almighty.

They expend their material possessions in the Cause of Allah through bearing aid to the poor and the miserable. They make use of their power and rank to assist the oppressed and the needy.

Verse 39 is saying that it is a characteristic of believers who take vengeance upon disbelieving wrong-doers when they are wronged by them. They never surrender to their opponents rather they struggle against them valiantly such that they defeat them, since the humility of Muslims is on a par with that of the Islamic faith.

It is worthy of note that it is incumbent upon Muslims to defend themselves with seeking aid from believers. Silence against being wronged is forbidden. It is incumbent upon Muslims to forgive believers but believers are supposed to defend themselves against wrong-doers and seek aid from other believers

(*"forgive," "seek succor"*).

Surah al-Shura - Verses 40 - 41

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ

وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

40. The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof; but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah. Indeed, He likes not the wrong doers.
41. And indeed whosoever seeks succor [***for compensation***] ***after he has suffered wrong for such there is no blame against them.***

One may take just vengeance against the transgression of his rights;

(*"The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof"*);

however, one who is powerful enough to take vengeance but he forgives and makes reconciliation shall

be granted a great Reward;

(*“but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah”*).

The clause;

“his reward is with Allah”

is attested twice in the Holy Qur’an; an instance of which10 regards Meccan Emigrants (Muhajirun) and the other instance concerns forgiving the evil deeds committed by others attested in the blessed Verse in question. Thus, it is evident that the recompense for forgiving and making reconciliation is on a par with emigration toward Allah.

The blessed Verse 40 is saying that believers are such that if someone wrongs them, they take a well-measured vengeance upon them and a believer who forgives the wrong done to him by his brother in faith shall be granted a great Reward by God Almighty, since Allah does not favor wrong-doers.

Verse 41 is saying that one who takes his revenge upon someone who has wronged him shall stay unharmed by the Muslim community nor shall he be chastised nor reproached for his vengeance.

It is everyone’s legitimate right to take revenge upon the wrong-doer since it is not reproached in this world nor will it be recompensed in the Hereafter. However, if he forgives the wrong-doer, he shall be rewarded by God Almighty.

Surah al-Shura - Verses 42 - 43

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَظْلِمُونَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

42. The way [*of blame*] *is only against those who oppress men and rebel in the earth without justification; for such* [*wrong-doers*] *there will be an excruciating torment.*
43. And verily, whosoever shows patience and forgives [*the wrong-doer*] *that would truly be from the things recommended by Allah.*

It is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an11 that

“No ground of complaint can there be against good-doers.”

It was also reflected in the preceding Verse that the oppressed are not subject to reproach. The blessed Verse 42 is saying that wrong-doers are to be reproached. Islam is a comprehensive religion that

recognizes the rights of the oppressed and also leaves room for forgiving. Verses 41 and 42 express the states of the wrong-doers and the wronged.

According to the Qur'anic Verse:

"Thus the one who wrongs you, you may take your revenge upon them"

when believers take revenge upon wrong-doers proportionate to the wrong done to them, they shall not be chastised by believers since they have attained their right. Nonetheless, those who wrong people and make mischief on the earth without justification are supposed to be chastised by believers and an excruciating torment is in store for wrong-doers.

Verse 43 is saying that one who is patient and forgives believers possesses determination and excellences.

The blessed Verse may allude to the fact that those who have been wronged by others and failed to attain to their rights have been patient. Such people possess determination since it requires a strong and confident soul to confront hardships and persevere in making efforts to achieve one's goals.

Such were Arch-Prophets (as) so strong and perseverant that they could bear the wrongs done to them by people, but they never make attempts at taking their revenge upon their enemies unless they were divinely appointed to wage war against disbelievers in order to support religion.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 44

وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ لَمَّا رَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ إِلَى مَرَدٍّ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

44. And whomsoever Allah sends astray [***and abandons him in his error***]***, for him there is no protector for him. And you will see the wrong-doers when they behold the torment, they will say: "Is there any way of return*** [***to the world***]***?"***

Transgression of people's rights entails deprivation from Divine Guidance and entanglement with the abyss of error, perplexity, and remorse. Those who are in error are supposed to know that no power shall deliver them from error.

They are those who are not guided through Divine Guidance. One who voluntarily turns away from Truth and failed to be guided by God Almighty shall proceed the way toward the abyss of humility and error and he will have neither friends nor protectors.

The Noble Prophet's (S) heart was so enlightened by Divine Light that he could notice that disbelievers would be encompassed by Hell and was also able to see that upon tasting Divine torment in the

Hereafter, they would desperately inquire if they could return to the world and compensate for their evil deeds.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 45

وَتَرَاهُمْ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا خَاشِعِينَ مِنَ الذُّلِّ يَنْظُرُونَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ خَفِيٍّ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَلَا إِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ مُقِيمٍ

45. And you will see them brought forward to it [***Hell***] ***made humble by disgrace,*** [***and***] ***looking with stealthy glance. And those who believe will say: "Truly, the losers are they who lose themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection. Verily, the wrong doers will be in a lasting torment.***

Those who are arrogant today shall be in disgrace tomorrow. The fright caused by noticing the Resurrection will make evil-doers lose their eye-sight.

The blessed Verse in question addresses the Noble Prophet (S) and says:

"You also notice the state of wrong-doers who wronged themselves and were deprived of Divine Guidance. Now it is the time that they tasted Divine torment.

They will be so desperate, humbled, and disgraced that they will be afraid of taking a glance at Hellfire but look at stealthily. When believers who are saved from torment see the torment of disbelievers, they say these are the losers who spent their mundane life in vain instead of gaining benefits from their transactions.

They are losers and together with their adherents fall into the abyss of Hell. The people of the world are supposed to be aware that disbelieving and polytheist wrong-doers shall remain in torment and Hell everlastingly."

Surah al-Shura - Verse 46

وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ

46. And they will have no protectors to help them other than Allah. And he whom Allah sends astray, for him there is no way [***of deliverance***].

The blessed Verse in question is saying that polytheists and disbelievers who invoked idols and other objects of worship to intercede on their behalf and assumed that they would be effective in warding off torment in their time of desperate need were in error unaware of the truth that there is no friend nor

support to deliver them from torment and whoever failed to find the path to happiness through Divine Guidance will have no other way of deliverance.

Surah al-Shura – Verse 47

اسْتَجِيبُوا لِرَبِّكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لا مَرَدَّ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ مَلْجَأٍ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نَكِيرٍ

***47. Answer the Call of your Lord before there comes from Allah a Day which cannot be averted. You will find no refuge on that Day nor will there be for you any denying* [*of your sins*].**

Acting upon Divine Injunctions leads to our growth.

Thus, we are supposed to obey our Provider;

(***"Answer to the Call of your Lord"***).

Following Divinely appointed Prophets preserves man from incurring loss. The preceding Verses treated of losers and the blessed Verse in question says that the solution lies in obedience to God Almighty and serving Him.

Two possible interpretations have been provided regarding the contextual meaning of

"there comes from Allah a Day which cannot be averted":

1. Sinners may not return to the world.

2. That Day will indubitably come and it may not be averted. It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question addresses mankind.

They are asked to answer the Divine Call and acknowledge and act upon the Injunctions Divinely revealed to His Prophet (S) before you miss the opportunity of saving righteous good deeds in this world for the Day of desperation.

The Resurrection Day shall come whereon there shall not be any return for anyone, since losers have actually spent in vain the faculty of perfection.

They there shall be no refuge to be sought since they had all Divine Decisive Arguments available to them but they knowingly denied the Prophetic Call and the Truth of the Holy Qur'an. They may not deny their disbelief at the Divine Tribunal on the Day of Resurrection.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 48

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظاً إِنْ عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا الْبَلاغُ وَإِنَّا إِذَا أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً فَرِحَ بِهَا وَإِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَإِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ كَفُورٌ

48. But if they turn away** [do not be sad, since] **We have not sent you** [O Muhammad] **as a protector over them** [to make them believe]. **Your duty is to convey** [the Message]. **Indeed, when We cause man to taste of Mercy from Us, he rejoices thereat** [and neglects his duties]**; but when some ill befalls them because of the deeds which their hands have sent forth** [they consign Divine Bounties to oblivion and] **then verily, man** [becomes] **ingrate!

The Noble Prophet's (S) duty was to impart Divine Call rather than make people believe in God Almighty. Mercy is from God Almighty but afflictions are the consequences of man's vicious deeds.

To console His Messenger (S) deeply concerned with disbelievers' denial of his Call, God Almighty bids unto him to not be sad since He did not appoint him to watch over their deeds rather his duty solely lies in guiding them to the Strait Path of Divine Laws and impart his Prophetic Call.

The blessed Verse closes with human vices saying that whenever God Almighty makes man taste of His Mercy and Bounties, he rejoices and whenever he is afflicted with afflictions as the evil consequences of his vicious deeds, he becomes ingratiate, since it is a human characteristic that he is ingratitude for Blessings.

It is his natural disposition that even if he rejoices Blessings for a hundred years but is afflicted with some unfavorable circumstance, he will forgive those Blessings and Favors and complaints of afflictions and becomes ingratitude for Divine Blessings.

Surah al-Shura - Verses 49 - 50

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَاثاً وَيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ

أَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَاناً وَإِنَاثاً وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ عَقِيماً إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ

49. To Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows female** [offspring] **upon whom He wills, and bestows male** [offspring] **upon whom He wills.
50. Or He bestows both males and females** [in the same womb]**, and He renders barren whom He wills. Indeed, He is the Omniscient, the Omnipotent.

Since pre-Islamic Arabs living in the Age of Ignorance preferred male offspring over female ones, the word

***yahabu* (*"bestows"*)**

is employed for both male and female offspring in Verse 49 to indicate that they are both Divine Gifts and the word:

***inathan* (*"female* [*offspring*]*"*)**

precedes

***al-dhukur* (*"male* [*offspring*]*"*)**

with the definite article to say that the male offspring at whom you rejoice are also Divine Gifts.

The clause:

***yuzawwijuhum* (*"bestows them"*)**

designates that God Almighty at times bestows male and/or female offspring.

Verse 49 is saying that the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth solely belongs to God Almighty since He is the Possessor of the heavens and the earth and creation of the world and all creatures has been made possible through His Omnipotence and Omniscience and everything is dependent upon His Will. He bestows male and female offspring upon whomever He wills as per His Discretion and Wisdom. He may bestow male and female offspring in pairs or many male and female offspring.

It is dependent upon His Wisdom and Discretion that He makes some females barren and sterile. He is the Omnipotent, the Omniscience. These blessed Verses make a reference to Divine Perfect Might and Knowledge. Nothing may impede His Will.

Surah al-Shura - Verse 51

وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا وَحْياً أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ أَوْ يُرْسِلَ رَسُولاً فَيُوحِيَ بِإِذْنِهِ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّهُ عَلِيٌّ حَكِيمٌ

51. It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak unto him unless* [*it be*] *by Revelation* [*descended upon his heart*]*, or from behind a veil, or* [*that*] *He sends a messenger* [*an angel*] *to reveal what He wills by His Leave. Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise.

Occasion of Revelation. A number of Qur'anic exegets present an occasion of Revelation for the blessed Verse in question whose summary is as follows.

A number of Jews came unto the Noble Prophet (S) and said:

"Why do you not speak unto God nor do you look at Him? If you are the Messenger of God, speak unto and look at Him in the manner that Moses (as) did. We never believe in you unless you do likewise."

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Moses (as) never saw God Almighty."

Then, the blessed Verse in question was revealed unto the Noble Prophet (S) to express the manner of the Prophet's nexus with God Almighty.[12]

Divine Revelation is from God Almighty. It is not dependent upon human will. It is from the Exalted Lord and it is based on His Wisdom. Since the preceding Verses treated of Divine Bounties, the blessed Verse in question treats of the most significant of Divine Bounties and Favors bestowed by Him upon humanity.

These Bounties and Favors are Divine Revelation and the Prophets' nexus with God Almighty.

In the first place, the blessed Verse says:

"It is not given to any human being that Allah should speak unto him unless* [*it be*] *by Revelation* [*descended upon his heart*]*, or from behind a veil"

in the manner that Moses son of 'Imran spake unto God Almighty and received His Answers through sound waves produced by God in the air without His being seen, since looking at Him is impossible.

Such communication is also possible through sending a messenger to impart unto him the Divine Message

(*"or* [*that*] *He sends a messenger* [*an angel*]*"*).

Likewise, the angel of Revelation, the Divine Messenger, Gabriel the trustworthy, descended upon the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). It is at that time that God's Messenger imparts unto His Prophet (S) whatever He wills through His Command.

There exists no other means of communication between God Almighty and His servants, since He is Most Exalted and All-Wise;

(*"Verily, He is Most High, Most Wise"*).

He is far Exalted such they no one may see or speak unto Him. All his Acts are Wise and His Nexus with His Prophets are well-measured. The blessed Verse serves actually as a clear response to those who may out of ignorance imagine that Divine Revelation designates that Prophets may see God Almighty

and speak unto Him.

The blessed Verse concisely and precisely reflects the nature and truth of Divine Revelation.

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse indicates that there are solely three means of communication between Prophets and God Almighty:

Revelation unto heart, instances of which are to be found with many a Prophet, e.g.

"Therefore, We revealed unto him [***Noah*** (***as***) ***saying***]***: 'Construct the ship before Us and as per Our Command'"***13.

From behind the veil, in the manner that God Almighty spake unto Moses (as) on the Mount of Tur

(***"And to Moses*** (***as***) ***Allah spake directly,"***14).

Through sending down a Messenger, in the manner that God Almighty spake with the Noble Prophet of Islam (as):

"Say [***O Muhammad*** (***S***)]***: 'Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel*** [***is an enemy of God Almighty***]***, since verily he has brought it*** [***the Holy Qur'an***] ***down unto your heart through Allah's Permission,'"***15.

It is to be noted that it was not the exclusive means of receiving Divine Revelation by the Noble Prophet of Islam (S). Divine Revelation was also descended upon Prophets through revealing unto him Divine Message when he was awake as it was mentioned above.

At times, Prophets received Divine Revelation in sleep through true dreams, for instance in the case of Abraham (as) who received the Divine Command to sacrifice Ishmael, although a number of Qur'anic exegets have considered it an instance of Divine Revelation from behind a veil.

Although the main means of sending down Divine Revelation constitute the three means mentioned in the blessed Verse in question, but each of which may fall into further categories, as a number of Qur'anic exegets maintain that sending down Divine Revelation through the angel of Revelation constitutes four means:

Where the angel of Revelation imparted the Divine Message unto the Noble Prophet's (S) heart without appearing before him, as it is reflected in a Prophetic tradition saying:

"The Holy Spirit has revealed unto my heart that no one dies unless he receives his provision in full; therefore, fear God Almighty and be not avaricious in seeking your provision."

At time, the angel of Revelation appeared in human form, addressed the Noble Prophet (S) and imparted the Divine Message unto him. According to a number of traditions, Gabriel appeared in the form of Dahya (or Dihya) Kalbi.16

At times, he heard Divine Revelation like chimes and it was the hardest means of receiving Divine Revelation such that even in very cold days his blessed visage perspired and if he was mounted, the mount was not able to carry the burden and sat down.

At times, Gabriel appeared to him in his original form as he was created by God Almighty. It happened only twice in his life time, as it will be revealed below under 53:12.[17]

Finally, it may be mentioned that means are Divine Revelation falls into ten categories in the book Wujuh al-Qur'an; however, taking into account all the instances of the word:

wahy **(*"Revelation"*)**

and its derivatives, it may be concluded that Divine Revelation falls into two categories: legislative Revelation (wahy tashri'i) sent to Prophets (as) between whom and God Almighty existed a particular nexus through which they received Divine Commands and Truths, and existential Revelation (wahy takwini) constituting the specific instincts, faculties, conditions, and laws placed by God Almighty in different creatures of the world.

Some Traditions Concerning Divine Revelation

There are numerous traditions regarding Divine Revelation mentioned in Islamic sources which shed some light on this mysterious nexus between Prophets and the Originator of creation.

It is reported in a number of traditions that when the angel of Revelation descended upon the Noble Prophet (S) he was alright but when immediate nexus was established he felt an extraordinary burden such that at times he became unconscious.

According to a tradition narrated by Saduq in his Tawhid on the authority of Imam Sadiq (as) that the Noble Imam (as) was asked:

"What was the state of unconsciousness experienced by the Noble Prophet (S) at the time of Divine Revelation?"

He replied:

"It occurred when the Revelation was sent down upon him at the time of Divine Immediate Manifestation."[18]

When Gabriel was sent down to the Noble Prophet (S), the Archangel respected him, as it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"When Gabriel came to the Noble Prophet (S), he sat down before him like servants and never entered without permission."[19]

A number of traditions indicate that it was through Divine Blessing and inward intuition that the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) could easily recognize Gabriel, as it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"It was solely through Divine Blessing that the Messenger of God (S) recognized that God Almighty had sent down angel Gabriel."[20]

An interpretation which is worthy of note is attested in a tradition narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas concerning the Noble Prophet's unconsciousness at the time of Divine Revelation:

"When Divine Revelation was descended upon the Noble Prophet (S), he felt an excruciating pain and suffered from headache and felt an extraordinary heaviness. It is in this vein that the Holy Qur'an says that God Almighty sent down a grave Word on him. The tradition further adds that Gabriel was sent down onto the Messenger of Allah (S) sixty thousand times.[21]

Surah al-Shura - Verses 52 - 53

وَكَذَلِكَ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ رُوحاً مِنْ أَمْرِنَا مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُوراً نَهْدِي بِهِ مَنْ نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَإِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِي إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَلا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ

52. And thus We have sent to you a Revelation of Our Command [***the Holy Qur'an***]. ***You knew not what the Book is, nor what the faith. But We have made it*** [***the Qur'an***] ***a Light wherewith We guide whosoever of Our slaves We will. And verily, you*** [***O Muhammad***] ***are indeed guiding*** [***people***] ***to the Straight Path.***
53. The Path of Allah to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. Verily, all matters at the end go to Allah.

The Chapter in question opened with the Verse of Revelation:

(***"HM.'A S Q. Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation unto you*** [***O Muhammad***]***"***)

and it closes with the same;

(***"And thus We have sent to you a Revelation of Our Command*** [***the Holy Qur'an***]***"***).

Some Qur'anic exegets maintain that the word:

ruh (***"spirit"***)

in Verse 52 refers to ruh al-amin (“the faithful or trusted spirit, Gabriel”) and some others hold that it indicates an angel more exalted in rank than other angels:

(***cf. “Therein descend the angels and the spirit,”***[22]).

Some also hold that it makes a reference to the Holy Qur’an. The last interpretation seems to be preferable. Spirit is the essence of life and the Holy Qur’an is the secret of man’s spiritual life.

In the same manner that body without spirit disintegrates and decays, society without The Book, the Holy Qur’an, is unimaginable and in the same manner that spirit never becomes old and useless, so is the Holy Qur’an that will defy the passage of time.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verses in question proceed the general discussion on Divine Revelation raised in the preceding Verses and treat of the same saying:

“In the same manner that We sent Our Revelation upon former Prophets through diverse means, We have sent to you a Revelation of Our Command.”

The adverb

“thus” (***ka-dhalika***)

may indicate that all the three types of Divine Revelation were realized for the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and at times he established immediate nexus with the Pure Essence of Lord, at times heard the Revelation through the angel of Divine Revelation, and at times he heard a voice like sound waves as reflected in the aforesaid Islamic traditions.

Concerning the meaning of

“spirit’

in this context, Qur’anic exegets maintain two views. Firstly, the Holy Qur’an is being intended which rejuvenates hearts and souls. The majority of Qur’anic exegets hold the same view.[23]

In his Mufradat, Raghib also says that the Holy Qur’an is termed as spirit in the Verse:

“And thus We have sent to you a Revelation of Our Command”

since it leads to the life in the Hereafter.

The interpretation is consistent with the different pieces of evidence attested in the Verse, e.g. the adverb:

“thus” (***ka-dhalika***)

alluding to Divine Revelation and the expression:

"We have sent a Revelation" (***awhayna***)

and the expressions regarding the Holy Qur'an under the Verse in question.

Secondly,

"spirit"

connotes the Holy Spirit or an Archangel who accompanied the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) at all times and was more exalted in rank than those like Gabriel and Michael.

Based on the same interpretation, awhayna is used in the sense of anzalna, namely We have sent down the Holy Spirit or an Archangel onto you.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"You knew not what the Book is, nor what the faith. But We have made it [***the Qur'an***] ***a Light wherewith We guide whosoever of Our slaves We will."***

In other words, it was Divine Favor bestowed upon you that besides guiding you by this Great Scripture and its Guidance, He guides His other servants through this Divine Light covering the east and the west throughout the centuries to the end of the world.

Thus Verse 52 closes:

"Verily, you guide people unto the Straight Path."

The Holy Qur'an is the Divine Light for you and all people and also a means of Guidance for those treading the path leading to Truth, and the elixir for the thirsty.

The exposition of the Straight Path follows in Verse 53:

"The Path of Allah to Whom belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth."

Could there be found any path more straight than the one leading to the Originator of the world of existence? Is there any path smoother than the one leading to the Creator of the world of existence? True happiness is what God Almighty calls people unto it and the only way leading to it is the one which is chosen by Him.

The last sentence of the Verse which is the last sentence of the Chapter as well actually serves as an argument substantiating that the Straight Path is solely the one which leads toward God Almighty:

"Verily, all matters at the end go to Allah."

Since He is the Possessor and the Organizer of the world of existence and owing to the fact that all human plans toward perfection are to be accepted by this Great Organizer, the Straight Path is the only Path leading toward Him and any other path besides this one leads to error and falsehood.

Is there any Truth other than His Pure Essence in the world of existence? It is worthy of note that the sentence bears a glad tiding to the God fearing and a warning to wrong-doers and sinners who shall all return unto God Almighty.

It also bears testimony to the fact that Revelation should solely be from God Almighty, since the return of all existent beings shall be toward Him and with Him rests the management and judgment of all things.

Therefore, He should be the Origin of Divine Revelation sent down onto Prophets so that people may find true Guidance. Thus, the order of the Verses from the opening to the close of the Chapter is interrelated and the opening and the close of the Chapter are consistent with its prevailing theme of the same.

1. Tafsir al-Mizan.
2. 25:40
3. Majma' al-Bayan.
4. Majma' al-Bayan.
5. Tafsir Safi.
6. 35:45
7. Ibn Abi al-Hadid's Commentary on Nahj al-Balagha, vol. 7, p. 41.
8. Tafsir Nur, p. 412.
9. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 105, apud Tafsir Nimuna.
10. 4:100
11. 9:91
12. Tafsir Qurtubi, vol. 8, p. 5783.
13. 23:27
14. 4:164
15. 2:97
16. Dahya or Dihya ibn Khalifa al-Kalbi was the Noble Prophet's (S) foster brother and one of the most handsome men of his time. At times, Gabriel came unto the Noble Prophet (S) in his form, see Majma' al-Bahrayn, s.v. w-h-y. he was an eminent Companion of the Noble Prophet (S). The Prophet (S) sent him as an emissary to Heraclius, the Roman emperor in 6/627 or 7/628 and he lived to the reign of Mu'awiya (41-60/661-680), see Lughat-nama-yi Dihkhuda.
17. Fi Âalal al-Qur'an, vol. 7, p. 306.
18. Saduq's Tawhid, apud Bihar al-Anwar, vol.18, p. 256.
19. 'Ilal al-Shara'i', apud Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 18, p. 256.
20. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 18, p. 256.
21. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 18, p. 261.
22. 97:4
23. For instance, Óabarsi in Majma' al-Bayan, Shaykh Óusi in Tibyan, Fakhr Razi in Tafsir Kabir, Maraghi in Tafsir Maraghi.

Surah al-Zukhruf, Chapter 43, Verses 1 - 39

(The Gold Adornments)
Section (juz' 25)
Number of Verses: 89

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

Except for Verse 45, the rest of the Verses of the Chapter were revealed in Mecca.

The title of the Chapter derives from Verse 35 in which the word

zukhruf **(*"gold, silver; adornments"*)**

is attested. Main issues discussed in the Chapter include: the Holy Qur'an and prophethood; opponents' reaction against prophets; arguments substantiating Divine Unity, struggles against polytheism; partial narration of the legends of prophets; and a depiction of the Hereafter.

A point worthy of note is that seven consecutive Qur'anic Chapters, namely Ghafir, Fussilat, Shura, Zukhruf, Dukhan, Jathiya, and Ahqaf termed as Hawamim or Suwar Al Ha Mim, open with the detached letters HM.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

Many sources on Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir) and tradition (hadith) include Islamic traditions concerning many a merit for the recitation of the Chapter in question, an instance of which is a Prophetic tradition saying:

"One who recites Surah al-Zukhruf is among those who are thus addressed on the Day of Resurrection:

'O My servants, you are to entertain neither fear nor grief on this day as you shall be admitted to Paradise[1] *provided that you act upon religious instructions.'"*

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 1 - 4

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآناً عَرَبِيّاً لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

وَإِنَّهُ فِي أُمِّ الْكِتَابِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيٌّ حَكِيمٌ

1. HM
2. By the illuminating Book [***the Qur'an***]***.***
3. Indeed We have made it a Qur'an in the Arabic [***tongue***] ***that you may be able to understand*** [***It***]***.***
4. And indeed It is in the Mother of the Book [***the preserved tablet, lawh mahfus***] ***with Us indeed exalted, full of wisdom, and firm on Its basis.***

The characteristics of the Holy Qur'an as a Divinely Revealed Book include: manifest and illuminating (mubin); springing from Divine Omniscience (fi Umm al-Kitab); of immaterial origin (ladayna); Its form and content are exalted ('aliy); Its contents are full of wisdom and firm on Its basis (hakim).

The word

qur'an (***"book"***)

derives from the root q-r-' ("recite, read").

'Arabi (***"clear, manifest"***)

is taken from 'Arab ("the Arabs"). The Arabic tongue is employed in the sense of clear and unambiguous language.

The Chapter in question as well as the following ones includes discussions by Qur'anic exegets concerning HM to the effect that the detached letters constitute the title of the Chapters or they may serve as a reference to the Most Beautiful Divine Names e.g. the Praiseworthy (Hamid), the All-Glorious (Majid), the Compassionate (Hannan), the Benevolent (Mannan), the Protector (Hafis), and the Noble (Majid).

It is said that all the letters of alphabet opening a number of the Qur'anic Chapters apparently serve as codes between God Almighty and His Prophet (S) regarded as Qur'anic equivocal Verses (mutashabihat) the knowledge of which rests with God and those well rooted in knowledge (al-rasikhun fi 'l-ilm) thus dropping the subject is more appropriate.

Waw **(*"by"*)**

is the word of oath which ad hoc makes a reference to the manifest Book, namely the Holy Qur'an, which is clear in terms of form and eloquence and is inimitable, i.e., producing the same form, meaning, and intricacies rests beyond human capacity.

A brief reflection on the form and content of Qur'anic Verses clearly indicates that the most eminent scholars fail to discover Its least intricacies even if they exert themselves assiduously; none the less Its injunctions and laws are manifest:

(*"Indeed We have made it a Qur'an in the Arabic* [*tongue*] *that you may be able to understand* [*It*]*"*).

The preceding clause is the apodosis of the oath which is ad hoc employed in the sense of taking an oath to the Qur'an Divinely Revealed by God Almighty to His Prophet (S) in the Arabic tongue so that the Arabs ponder on Its meaning and intricacies.

One of the grounds behind Revelation of the Holy Qur'an in the Arabic tongue is that it is the most eloquent and the most comprehensive language and eminent scholars bear testimony to the fact that it rests on comprehensive and precise rules possessing the capacity to convey the most intricate and significant points and issues.

Another reason is that according to the Holy Qur'an:

"And war your tribe of near kindred"[2]

as per which the Noble Prophet (S) was Divinely appointed to guide his kith and kin and since they were from the Quraysh tribe wo were speakers of the Arabic tongue, the Holy Qu'an was Revealed in it. However, there are other secrets known by experts.

The fourth Verse enumerates three more characteristics of the Holy Qur'an:

1. Prior to Its Revelation to the Noble Prophet (S), the Holy Qur'an had been recorded in the Mother of the Book, namely the Preserved Tablet (lawh mahfus), in Divine Presence.

2. It is the Most Elevated Book among all Divinely Revealed Books and it the Most Comprehensive Book abrogating preceding ones. It will serve as Divine Guidance to man to the Last Day without being abrogated by any other book.

3. The Holy Qur'an is full of wisdom, namely it provides man with wisdom. All Its injunctions and laws rest on reason and logic and Its Verses are consistent with intellectual proofs and arguments. Furthermore, it rests on the golden mean such that a brief reflection on It will suffice for the wise and scholars to acknowledge that It is Revealed by the Wise Originator of creation.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 5 - 8

أَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحاً أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْماً مُسْرِفِينَ

وَكَمْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ

وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

فَأَهْلَكْنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشاً وَمَضَى مَثَلُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

5. Shall We then take away the Reminder [***i.e., the Holy Qur'an***] ***from you, because you are transgressors beyond bounds.***
6. And how many a prophet have We sent amongst the ancient.
7. And never came there a prophet to them but they would mock him.
8. Then We destroyed men stronger [***in terms of power***] ***than them*** [***transgressors of bounds***] ***and the fate of the ancient was recurred.***

Ignoring Divine injunctions is regarded as transgression of bounds (israf). All prophets were mocked by disbelievers; therefore, any prophet was expected to be aware of his predecessors so that he would not desist from carrying out his duty for disbelievers' mockery.

Verse five is a reference to the preceding one.

"Shall We then take away" (***a-fa-nadribu***)

is a rhetorical question conveying the meaning that are We supposed to leave you in your ignorance and take away the Reminder, namely the Holy Qur'an, from you so that you may be deprived of such Divine Favor despite your transgression of bounds, persistence in disbelief and animosity to the extreme, and your being astray in the abyss of error?

It may allude to disbelievers' persistence in staying in error and denial of Divine Guidance, namely the inimitable Word emanated from the springhead of Divine Favor revealed to the Prophet (S) for guidance

and felicity.

Despite disbelievers' turning away from the Reminder, God Almighty provides humanity with everlasting Grace and innumerable Favors through the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an in order that they may benefit from Divine Guidance.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S), the following Verses serve as a consolation to him and a warning against polytheists by saying that God Almighty appointed many a prophet among the polytheist ancient who transgressed the bounds.

Their disbelief did not hinder Divine appointment of prophets. All prophets were subject to the mockery of ancient disbelievers and it was their disbelief that led to the chastisement of the most powerful of the ancient nations and their perdition.

A number of instances are attested in the Holy Qur'an as per which the glory and power of the ancient could not impede their being chastised for their persistence in disbelief and their treatment of their prophets. Their dire fate may serve as a lesson to others.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 9

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ

9. And indeed if you ask them, "Who has created the heavens and the earth" They will surely say: "The Omnipotent, the Omniscient** [**God**] **created them."

Polytheists regarded God as the Creator, but they worshipped idols which bears testimony to the fact that even if vanity, ignorance and imitating ancestors overshadows human intellection, primordial natural disposition (fitra) fully comprehends Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S) the blessed Verse in question is saying O Muhammad (S), if you ask these disbelievers and polytheists about the Creator of the heavens and the earth, they will unhesitatingly answer,

"the Omniscient, the All-Victorious, the All-Conqueror God has created them."

It alludes to the fact that human primordial disposition is by nature inclined toward Divine Unity bearing to the existence of the One God through his primordial disposition since human intellect bears testimony to the fact that no construction, movement, or created being may exist without constructor, mover, or creator.

Reflecting on his existence, man comprehends that he is created ex nihilo, how could he deny the

existence of Divine Unity when reflecting on the systematicity of creation, the glory of the vast world and the secrets of Creation manifest throughout the world of Creation all bowing to precise laws.

Nonetheless, man is too ignorant and wrong doing (saluman jahula) to associate other objects of worship with God and it is through his imperfect intellect that he imagines that other entities besides God may be of any effect in the world of existence.

The blessed Verse warns disbelievers who refrain from following prophetic teachings and neglect the truth that anyone, through his primordial disposition, comprehends that he is in the presence of the Sublime God and all the higher and lower creatures are subjugated to His Creation; however, disbelievers resort to frail creatures, such as inanimate things that are far inferior to them, for support and protection.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 10

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْداً وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلاً لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ

10. Who has made for you the earth a resting place, and has made for you roads therein, in order that you may find your way.

The path to Guidance is a Divine Favor. If the regions of the earth were detached by lofty mountains and deep valleys, mankind would be unable to live on it. Therefore, the possibility of constructing roads is a Divine blessing.

Traversing lands and perceiving them may lead man to the path of Guidance. The blessed Verse indicates Divine Unity and His Essential Attributes a posteriori saying that God Whose Existence is acknowledged by you is the Creator of the heavens and the earth.

He is the Creator of all things Who has made the earth for you like a cradle through His Grace and Bounty. The similitude of the earth to a cradle is a reference to the rotation of the earth on its axis.

The rotary movement of the earth is also discovered by modern science. It is worthy of note that astronomers of the old maintained that the earth is motionless and the sun rotates around the earth once in 24 hours and the existence of nights and days are resulted from the solar rotary movement.

Qur’anic exegets have interpreted the word mahd as peace and rest, but the word means the cradle used for infants as a place of rest. The discovery of the rotary motion of the earth on its axis by modern science bears testimony to one of the Qur’anic miracles and secrets unknown to any anyone in olden times.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 11 - 12

وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتاً كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ

وَالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْفُلْكِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُونَ

11. And Who sent down water from the sky in due measure, then We revived a dead land therewith, and so you will be brought forth [***from the graves***].
12. And Who has created all the pairs and has appointed for you ships and cattle on which you ride:

The preceding Verse and the One in question make mention of Divine Unity and the Hereafter respectively. The word ***qadar*** is either used in the sense of "measure" or "ordainment and plan," i.e., He sent down rain in due measure or sent down rain as per ordainment and plan; therefore, all rain drops are sent down according to a well calculated plan;

(***"sent down water from the sky in due measure"***).

According to the blessed Verse, it is another Divine Favor that He sends down water from the sky so that the soil which is dead in winter season turns verdant in springtime.

"So you will be brought forth [***from the graves***]***"***

indicates that in the same manner the dead soil turns verdant in springtime as if it is revived, the dead undergo a drastic change on the Day of Resurrection and an everlasting life is bestowed upon them. The revival of the dead on the Day of Resurrection is likened to the rejuvenation of the dead soil in springtime in many a Qur'anic Verse.

The secret may lie in the fact that soil per se remain dormant in winter season but the land is not verdant with plants and in the meantime, through divine Omnipotence and Wisdom, rears water, freshness, and seeds in it such that it may be covered with verdant and lush coverage in springtime.

In like manner, man may turn mortal through death, but his material being turns invisible in this world and all his acts acquired and actualized in his lifespan turn invisible; however, they are reared posthumously and it will be through Divine Will that he will be accorded a new life on the Day of Resurrection which is the last stage of his journey toward the Divine.

On such Day, he will reap whatever he has sown such that if he sowed fruitless and bitter plants in the field of his being, he shall certainly reap the same on the Last Day.

Verse 12 is a Reminder from God Almighty to man that He has created all male and female pairs. It was mentioned elsewhere that all creatures have been created in male and female pairs, even constituent elements include positive and negative elements which stand on a par with male and female pairs in the animal world.

True Unity solely belongs to God Almighty, the Necessary Existent Being. The Verse in question also makes mention of other Divine Favors, e.g. ships that may easily traverse water and quadrupeds used for riding and other purposes, bestowed on mankind in order to meet their needs.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 13 - 14

لِتَسْتَوُوا عَلَى ظُهُورِهِ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ

وَإِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ

13. In order that you may mount on their backs and then may remember the Favor of your Lord when you mount thereon and say "Glory to Him Who has subjected this to us and we could never have it [***by making efforts***]***."***
14. And indeed to our Lord we shall return.

Benefiting from Divine Bounties is to be accompanied by remembrance of God Almighty and gratitude toward Him rather than vanity and negligence. Divine Bounties and their due measure is a reflection of Divine Lordship.

The blessed Verse says that when you mount on ships and quadrupeds, you should be aware that they are Bounties bestowed upon you by your Creator. You are supposed to say that God Almighty Who has subjected all these creatures in the heaven and on the earth are All-Glorious and man is too weak to subject such overpowering creatures to his will.

Thus man is supposed to be grateful toward God Almighty for the innumerable Bounties bestowed upon man. He should never be neglectful of remembering his Lord.

The Verse says:

"And indeed to our Lord we shall return"

which alludes to the remembrance of the Divine Origin of creation and the Hereafter. Whoever reflects and acknowledges through certain knowledge ('ilm al-yaqin) that God Almighty has subjected all creatures for human growth and perfection and each being is ordained to have a purpose and final end, he will acknowledge that man who is the ultimate end (ghayat al-ghayat) is supposed to attain to the

final end of his being which is to return to his Origin.

Such return shall be done on the Day of Resurrection as the final stage of human development. Returning to God Almighty is a great Favor for righteous believers bestowed by God Almighty Whose Most Beautiful Names include the All-Compassionate (al-Rahman) and the All-Gracious (al-Rahim).

Au contraire, disbelievers and hypocrites return to God Almighty Who is Wrathful and Whose Most Beautiful Names include All-Subjugating (al-Qahhar) and Strict in Punishment (Shadid al-'Iqab).

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 15 - 16

وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءاً إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ مُبِينٌ

أَمِ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفَاكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ

15. [***Polytheists said: "Angels are daughters of God"***] ***and they assigned to some of His servants a share with Him. Indeed man is a manifest ingrate.***
16. Or has He taken daughters out of what He has created and He has selected for you sons?

It would be unbefitting to regard daughters a disgrace and imagine that that God Almighty has daughters. The blessed verse in question alludes to disbelievers' ignorance that they assign to some of His servants a share with Him, such that angels who are His creatures are termed as God's daughters. This inappropriate attribution is a manifest token of disbelief.

The other point is that:

"or has He taken"

as a rhetorical question with hamza of denial in Arabic is a reproach to them to the effect that disbelievers regard weak creatures as God's offspring.

The blessed Verse inquires disbelievers:

"Would it be fitting that God Almighty select daughters for Himself from among His Creatures and select sons for you?"

Such attributions reveal their ignorance and inanity since daughters and sons are accorded shares with their parents but the Necessary Being is the Originator of the world.

He is One, Glorified, and Free from corporeality as it is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

“He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him”[3].

As a consequence, the blessed Verse 15 closes with saying that indeed man is a manifest ingrate.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 17

وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ مَثَلاً ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدّاً وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ

17. And if one of them is informed of the news of what pleases God the All-Compassionate, his face becomes dark and he suppresses his grief.

Those filled with grief upon being informed of the birth of a daughter and imagine that sons are better than daughters suffer from polytheistic superstitions.

The blessed Verse is a reproach to disbelievers who upon being informed of the news of the birth of a daughter that they set forth as a parable to the Most Gracious Allah, their faces became dark out of suppressed rage and ire since they deemed it a disgrace to have daughters and as a consequence of their malice and viciousness they attributed female offspring to God and called them Allah’s daughters.

The Verse reproaches disbelievers whose faces darkened from suppressed anger upon hearing the news of the birth of female offspring. However, the Creator of daughters and sons is the Same and they are both human beings and their offspring.

The Verse inquires of disbelievers:

“Why do you attribute to God what you deem weaker and attribute to yourselves what you regard stronger?”

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 18

أَوَمَنْ يُنَشَّأُ فِي الْحِلْيَةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ

18. Is [it appropriate that] the one who is brought up in adornments and who in dispute cannot make herself clear [be attributed to God Almighty]?

We noticed in Verse nine that polytheists regarded the Glorious and Omniscient God as the Creator of being.

The blessed Verse in question says:

“why do you who regard the Creator as Glorious and Omnipotent attribute daughters to Him who are

brought up in adornments and are subjugated by their feelings and sentiments in disputes, but the fact is that firmness and decisiveness rather than sentimentality are the prerequisites of endearment and logic and argumentation rather than being subjected to feelings are necessary for the acquisition of knowledge."

The Verse inquires of disbelievers,

"Why do you regard as Divine offspring the one who is brought up in adornments and who in disputes cannot make herself clear but regard sons as your offspring?"

The word ***yunsha'u*** (***"is brought up"***) derives from nasha'a (lit. "make something," ad hoc "be brought up"). The words *hilya* and *khisam* are employed in the senses of "adornment" and "dispute" respectively.

Two feminine characteristics noticed in the majority of females springing from their sentimentality are to be found in the blessed Verse in question, i.e., their keen interest in adornments and their insufficient capacity for substantiating their arguments which is due to their modesty and prudency.

There are indubitably females not so interested in adornments and a moderate interest in adornments is by no means a demerit for them. The demerit lies in extreme keenness of adornments as if they are born in adornments and are brought up there.

Likewise, there are females who possess a remarkable capacity for logic and argumentation, but it may not be denied that because of modesty and prudence, compared with males, the majority of females possess a weaker capacity for argumentation and disputation.

The major theme of the blessed Verse in question is that disbelievers regard female offspring as Allah's daughters and deem their sons as their own offspring.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 19

وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلائِكَةَ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ إِنَاثاً أَشَهِدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْأَلُونَ

19. And they make the angels who themselves are servants of the Most Gracious [***Allah***] ***females. Did they witness their creation? Their testimony*** [***for superstitions***] ***will be recorded and they will be questioned.***

All testimonies and words are recorded in the presence of Allah. Superstitious beliefs are to be severely suppressed. The blessed Verse reveals their unworthy and baseless words regarding their false beliefs according to which angels who are Allah's servants are termed as His daughters.

The Verse inquires:

"Were they present at the time of their creation to witness the manner of their making and learn that they were male or female? Their false words and testimonies will be recorded soon and they will be questioned on the Day of Resurrection and will be chastised for their words and acts."

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 20

وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَا عَبَدْنَاهُمْ مَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

20. And they said: "If it had been the Will of the Most Gracious [***Allah***]***, we should not have worshipped them." They have no knowledge*** [***nor scientific reason***] ***whatsoever of that. They say nothing but out of conjecture and supposition.***

Wrong doers make attempts at justification of their acts and take advantage of Divine Will as their pretext.

The word yakhrusun derives from khars which is employed in the sense of words based on conjecture and supposition. Words having no basis on knowledge, particularly those concerning dogmatic issues, are not to be acknowledged.

Consequently, the blessed Verse in question says that had the Most Gracious Lord willed, we would not have worshipped idols and false deities; thereby, they made attempts at exonerate themselves of sins saying that it had been Divine Will that they worshipped deities besides Allah.

The blessed Verse is a reply to them to the effect that such words, like other baseless words uttered by them, indicate their ignorance and illogicality.

They are liars since they utter untrue words since God Almighty never wills the disbelief of disbelievers as it is reflected in the Holy Qur'an:

"He is not pleased of His servants' disbelief"[4]***.***

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 21- 22

أَمْ آتَيْنَاهُمْ كِتَاباً مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ

بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَى أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَى آثَارِهِمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

21. Or have We given them any Book before this to which they are holding fast?
22. Nay! [***It is not so.***] ***They say: We found our fathers following a certain religion, and we have found guidance by following them.***

Polytheism and superstition have neither intellectual nor narrational bases. The blessed Verse in question makes a reference to another argument which may be produced by disbelievers.

The Verse says,

"Or We have provided them with any Book before this to which they hold fast,"

i.e., they are supposed to take resort to rational or narrational arguments in order to substantiate their claim; nonetheless, they fail to provide either of the twain since all intellectual arguments as well as the teachings of prophets and scriptures bear witness to Divine Unity.

Verse 22 makes a reference to their main pretext which is no more than a superstitious claim serving as the pivot of another.

The blessed verse in question informs of their false claim:

"We found our fathers following a certain religion and we have found guidance by following them."

They blindly imitated their ancestors and forefathers. It is interesting to know that they regarded themselves guided to the right path whereas in dogmatic issues no wise person may rely on imitation particularly in the manner of ignorant imitation of the ignorant.

We know that their ancestors possessed no knowledge but they were preoccupied with superstitious beliefs and ignorance wielded a vast sway in their thoughts and society.

The point is that imitation is solely sensible in minor issues and such imitation is supposed to be based on scholarly and expert advice such that patients and non-specialists take the advice of physicians and experts. As a consequence, it may be said that disbelievers' blind imitation from their ancestors and forefathers was inaccurate.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 23

وَكَذَٰلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ مُقْتَدُونَ

23. And similarly We sent not a warner before you to any town but the luxurious ones among them said: "We found our fathers following a certain religion and we will indeed follow their footsteps."

The word

***mutraf* (*“living in ease and luxury”*)**

derives from tarifa (“to live in opulence”) and implies one whose opulent life has led him to vanity.

It was mentioned in the preceding Verse that common people believe that their ancestors’ way of life was true and they may follow their footsteps in order to tread the path of guidance:

(*“we have found guidance by following them”*).

However, the blessed Verse in question says that those living in luxury think about opulence and worldly possessions rather than attaining to guidance and following their ancestors’ beliefs is not for attaining to guidance:

(*“we will indeed follow their footsteps”*).

In this blessed Verse, God Almighty informs His Prophet (S) that all the prophets before him said unto people that they were all treading the path of falsehood and prophets were appointed by God Almighty, the Creator of the world, to lead them to the right path and show them the path of felicity and deliverance so that they may know that the God of the world is One and he has no associates in His Divine Being and Essence rather he creates out of His Will.

He provides for His creatures through Omnipotence. He is neither part of a whole nor any thing is part of Him. He is All-Glorious and free from corporeality.

***“He begets none, nor was He begotten”*[5].**

All attributes of Perfection, e.g. Everlastingness and Unity are His. Such Divine Being rather than incompetent and ignorant objects of worship is Praiseworthy. In response to the prophets’ wise admonitions, they did not resort to their reason and common sense but said that they followed the footsteps of their ancestors and believed in their religion.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 24 - 25

قَالَ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِأَهْدَى مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

24. [Their Prophet] said, “[Would you desist from following your ancestors’ footsteps] if I bring you better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?” They said: “Indeed we

disbelieve in that with which you have been sent."
25. Therefore, We took revenge on them then see what was the end of those who denied [***monotheism***].

It is worthy of note that one may offer a better alternative in forbidding evil;

(***"I bring you better guidance"***).

One method of the presentation of a school of thought is to compare and contrast the teachings of different schools. In their Calls, prophets made use of reason and intellection where as their opponents resorted to tribalism and imitation.

The point is that taking revenge and violence in their appropriate places are not inconsistent with Divine Mercy and Grace.

According to the last two Verses their prophets inquired them to make use of their intellection to perceive if prophets provide them with a better course leading to righteousness and felicity they must acknowledge the truth and thereby benefit from Divine Favors. However, they turned away from Divine Guidance and went to extremes in the persecution of prophets.

They were so entangled with tribalism, vanity, and enmity that they were not supposed to turn to Divine Guidance rather regarding them the Holy Quran says:

"[***They are***] ***the deaf, dumb, and blind. Therefore, they do not understand"***[6].

Then it was the proper season for taking revenge;

(***"Therefore, We took revenge on them"***)

and they were subject to Divine Wrath and they were afflicted with diverse torments such as drowning, tempest, and icy gale.

The Noble Prophet (S) is here addressed thus:

"See what was the end of those who denied [***monotheism***]***."***

It is apparently addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) but it implies a warning to polytheists and disbelievers.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 26 - 28

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي بَرَاءٌ مِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ

إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ

وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

***26. And* [*remember*] *when Abraham* (*as*) *said unto his father* [*his paternal uncle, Azar*] *and his people: "Indeed I dislike what you worship, "Except Him Who did create me; and indeed He will guide me." And he made it* [*the formula of Divine Unity, namely "There is no god but Allah"*] *a Word lasting among his offspring that they may turn back* [*toward Divine Unity*].**

As mentioned above, idolaters' logic rested on following their ancestors' footsteps. According to the blessed Verse in question, Abraham (as) bitterly criticized the religion of his guardian who was his uncle as well.

The subject (fa'il) of the verb:

***ja'ala* (*"made"*)**

in the clause:

***wa ja'ala-ha kalimat-an baqiya* (*"and he made it a Word lasting"*)**

may be either God or Abraham (as); the former made Abraham (as) offspring to believe in Divine Unity thanks to Abraham (as) faith; it may also be said that Abraham (as) left the Call of Divine Unity and abstention from polytheism with his offspring.

According to a narration from Imam 'Ali (as), the Noble Prophet (S) is a descendant of Abraham (as) and the Prophet's Household (as) are descendants of Abraham (as) and Muhammad (S).[7]

Mention is briefly made of Abraham (as) and his encounter with his idol worshipping people of Babylon to complete the discussion on the reproach of blind imitation in the preceding Verses, since Abraham (as) was the most eminent Arab figure well respected by everyone and being descended from him was regarded as an honor.
He was the one who tore asunder the veils of blind imitation. The Holy Qur'an is saying that were they speaking the truth, they would follow his footsteps. Why did they blindly imitate idolaters if they were inclined toward adherence to their forefathers?

The other point is that the idolaters whose false beliefs were criticized by Abraham (as) resorted to the same groundless claim of following their ancestors' footsteps; nonetheless, Abraham (as) did not acknowledge their baseless claim as it is in the Holy Qur'an:

"They said, 'We found our fathers worshipping them.' He said, 'Indeed you and your fathers have

been in manifest error"' 8.

It is to be noted that it is a consolation for the Prophet (S) and early Muslims so that they know that such oppositions are not unprecedented and they are not supposed to lose their hope.

Firstly, it is said,

"[Remember] when Abraham (as) said unto his father [his paternal uncle, Azar] and his people: 'Indeed I dislike what you worship.'"

The following Verse says that since many an idolater worshipped god as well, Abraham (as) immediately makes an exception saying:

"Except Him Who did create me; and indeed He will guide me."

In this terse clause he makes mention of an argument according to which God alone is supposed to be worshipped since the object of worship is the Creator and the Governor of the world and everyone believed that God is the Creator of the world. It is also a reference to Divine Guidance in matters of existence and legislation as necessitated by Divine Grace.

According to Verse 28, Abraham (as) not only adhered to the principle of Divine Unity and struggled against any form of idolatry but also he made his utmost efforts to make the Word of Divine Unity last in the world for ever, as it is mentioned in the blessed Verse 28:

(And he made it [the formula of Divine Unity, namely "There is no god but Allah"] a Word lasting among his offspring that they may turn back [toward Divine Unity]).

It is worthy of note that the word ***'aqib*** is literally used in the sense of "heel," but it is figuratively employed in the sense of "offspring."

It is of interest to know that the followers of all world religions believing in Divine Unity are inspired by Abraham's (as) teachings regarding Divine Unity and the three arch-prophets Moses (as), Jesus (as), and Muhammad (S) are his descendants and it bears testimony to the veracity of the Qur'anic prediction in this vein.

It is true that prophets preceding Abraham (as), e.g. Noah (as) struggled against polytheism and idolatry and called the world to believe in Divine Unity,but it was Abraham(as) who made the Word of Divine Unity rest on its firm basis.

As an iconoclast, he raised the flag of Divine Unity everywhere.

In his lifetime, not only he made his utmost attempts at the continuity of belief in Divine Unity but also in his supplications he inquired the same from God Almighty:

(*“and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols,”*[9]).

According to another interpretation, the antecedent of the pronoun of ja’ala in Verse 28 is God Almighty as per which the meaning of the clause is that God placed the Word of Divine Unity in Abraham’s (as) Household.

However, the first interpretation as per which the antecedent of the pronoun is Abraham (as), seems preferable.

On the basis of different traditions narrated on the authority of the Noble Prophet’s Household (as), the antecedent of the pronoun is the question of imamate and naturally the antecedent of the subject pronoun is God; namely, God Almighty made the question of imamate last among Abraham (as) descendants.

It is mentioned in the Holy Qur’an[10] that when God said unto Abraham (as) that He appointed him as the imam, he prayed to God to appoint his descendants as imams and God answered to his prayer but He made an exception for wrong doers:

(“He said [***unto him***]***, ‘Verily, I am going to make you an Imam for mankind*** [***to follow you***]***.’ Abraham*** (***as***) ***said, ‘And of my offspring*** [***to make Imams***]***.’”*** [***Allah***] ***said, ‘My Covenant*** [***prophethood***] ***includes not wrong doers.’”***

The question arising at the first glance is that there is no mention of imamate in the Verse in question unless the clause:

“He will indeed guide me” (***sayahdin***)

be interpreted in a like manner since the prophets’ and imams’ guidance derives from Divine Guidance and the truth of imamate is identified with that of guidance.

It would be preferable to say that the question of imamate is included in that of Divine Unity since one of the branches of Divine Unity is the Unity of rule, guardianship, and leadership. We know that Imams derive their guardianship and leadership from Allah and they do not rely on themselves.

Likewise, such narrations specify a subcategory of the universal concept of:

“And he made it [***the formula of Divine Unity, namely “There is no god but Allah”***] ***a Word lasting”***

which is not inconsistent with the aforementioned exegesis.[11]

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 29- 30

بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هَؤُلَاءِ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَرَسُولٌ مُبِينٌ

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هَذَا سِحْرٌ وَإِنَّا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ

29. [Not only I did not destroy polytheists] but also I made them and their fathers to enjoy till there came to them the truth (the Holy Qur'an) and a Messenger (S) making things clear.
30. And when the truth came to them, they said: "This is magic and we disbelieve therein."

God makes believers and disbelievers enjoy and gives respite to all people.

The blessed Verse 29 says that God Almighty bestowed worldly possessions and pleasures to Meccan polytheists and fathers until the truth, i.e., the Holy Qur'an, and the Messenger of God (S) came to them making things clear.

Not only God Almighty made them think about the falsity of polytheism and idolatry and Divine Unity through their intellection and conscience, but also He gave them respite to benefit from Divine Guidance through turning to the Holy Qur'an, the Book which is all truth, and the Noble Prophet Muhammad (S).

"That they may turn back [toward Divine Unity]"

in the preceding Verse indicates that Abraham (as) made attempts at making his offspring turn to Divine Unity; nonetheless, the Arabs claimed to have descended from him but they failed to turn to It. God Almighty provided them with further respite through sending the Noble Prophet (S) with a new Book. It was awakening for a large number of the Arabs.

According to Verse 30, upon the revelation of the Holy Qur'an they failed to rectify their past errors and instead opposed the Word of Truth by saying that it was magic and they disbelieved in it:

("And when the truth came to them, they said: 'This is magic and we disbelieve therein'").

They called the Holy Qur'an magic and the Noble Messenger of God (S) magician. Had they persisted in their disbelief, they would have been afflicted with Divine chastisement.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 31 - 32

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنَ الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ

أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضاً سُخْرِيّاً وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

31. And they said: "Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some great man [in terms of dignity and wealth] of the two towns (Mecca and Ta'if)?"

32. Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord** [**regarding the Divine appointment of Muhammad to prophethood**]**? It is We Who portion out** [**between them**] **their livelihood in this world** [**let alone the exalted rank of prophethood**] **and We raised some of them above others in ranks so that some may employ others in their work. But the Mercy of your Lord is better than what they amass.

Some disbelievers entertained inappropriate expectations and said that such and such person was a man of substance and he was expected to receive revelation from God but the point is that material possessions may not necessitate spiritual superiority. Mention was made of polytheists' being difficult and making excuses against prophets' Calls in the preceding Verses.

At times they called their prophetic calls magic and sometimes they resorted to blind adherence to their ancestors and turned away from Divine Word.

Verses 31 and 32 make reference to another baseless excuse saying:

"Why is not this Qur'an sent down to some great man** [**in terms of dignity and wealth**] **of the two towns** (**Mecca and Ta'if**)**?"

they regarded worldly possessions, ranks, and reputation as the standards of dignity. Such ignorant people imagined that their wrong doing tribal chiefs and men of substance were the closest people to God and were surprised to learn that prophethood and the Divine great Favor had not been accorded to such people but they had been bestowed upon the poor orphan, Muhammad (S). It was incredible to them.

Such inaccurate merit system of theirs led to such inferences and they still account for the afflictions of human societies and the main reason behind their intellectual deviation which falsely depict the truths of human life.

The standard bearer of the Divine Call is supposed to be one whose heart brims with the spirit of piety, awareness, will, determination, courage, justice, and familiarity with the afflictions of the deprived and the oppressed.

The required values for imparting the Divine Call do not include beautiful attires, luxurious palaces, and adornments of all kinds. None of the prophets enjoyed such opportunities lest true and false values be confused.

Whom were pointed at by polytheists making excuses? Exegets are not unanimous on the issue; however the majority of them make references to Walid ibn Mughayra from Mecca and 'Urwa ibn Mas'ud Thaqafi from Ta'if. It is to be noted that polytheists did not apparently specify anyone but they means men of substance, good name, and noble descent.

Verse 32 is a harsh critique of such inappropriate and superstitious thought and perfectly explicates the

Islamic point of view:

“Is it they who would portion out the Mercy of your Lord** [**regarding the Divine appointment of Muhammad to prophethood**]**?”

Anyone may not be accorded prophethood nor may the scripture be revealed to anyone. It is God Almighty who portions out his Divine Mercy between them.

He knows better that who is worthy of being appointed to prophethood as it is said elsewhere in the Holy Quran:

“Allah knows best with whom to place his message”[12].

Furthermore, the differences between people in terms of wealth and substance may never account for their spiritual ranks, but

“It is We Who portion out** [**between them**] **their livelihood in this world** [**let alone the exalted rank of prophethood**] **and We raised some of them above others in ranks so that some may employ others in their work.”

They forget that man is inclined toward social life and managing the affairs may solely be carried out through cooperation and had all people enjoyed the same faculties, opportunities, standards of life, and social status, the principle of cooperation and division of labor would lose their balance.

Therefore, they are not supposed to be ensnared by such differences and imagine that they are the standards of human values:

“But the Mercy of your Lord is better than what they amass.”

In other words, worldly possessions and social ranks are of no value against Divine Mercy and closeness to Him. The word rabbi-ka which is employed twice in the Verse is a delicate allusion to the Divine Favor particularly accorded to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and appointing him as the Seal of Prophets.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 33 - 35

وَلَوْلا أَنْ يَكُونَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً لَجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمَنِ لِبُيُوتِهِمْ سُقُفاً مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُونَ

وَلِبُيُوتِهِمْ أَبْوَاباً وَسُرُراً عَلَيْهَا يَتَّكِئُونَ

وَزُخْرُفاً وَإِنْ كُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

33. And were it not that mankind would have become of one community [***of disbelievers***]***, We would have provided for those who disbelieve in the Most Gracious*** [***Allah***]***, silver roofs for their houses and stairs whereby they ascend.***
34. And for their houses, doors and thrones on which they could recline
35. And adornments of gold. Yet all this would have been nothing but an enjoyment of this world. And the Hereafter with your Lord is [***solely***] ***for the pious.***

Mundane embellishment is so valueless that God Almighty says in Verse 35 that He is prepared to accord abundant substance to disbelievers; nonetheless, people are easily deceived by them and if disbelievers be accorded such possessions, all people shall turn to disbelief.

Verse 33 is saying that disbelievers' enjoyment of diverse mundane possessions will lead to all people's inclination toward disbelief and error. In such case, God would have made for disbelievers houses with silver roofs.

"And were it not that mankind would have become of one community [***of disbelievers***]***, We would have provided for those who disbelieve in the Most Gracious*** [***Allah***]***, silver roofs for their houses and stairs whereby they ascend."***

The word ma'arij is used in the sense of stairs and ladders.

Some exegets maintain that silver stairs are meant herein and the word ***"silver"*** (***fidda***) is so clear that it is not reiterated; nonetheless, they do not apparently consider stairs as an indication of the significance of the houses, but it is not so, since numerous stairs indicate the splendor of the multi-storey construction;

"and stairs whereby they ascend."

The word:

saqf (***"roofs"***)

is the plural of suqf and some lexicologists consider it to be the plural for of saqifa ("roofed place"), however the former meaning seems to be preferable.

Verse 34 adds:

"And for their houses, doors and thrones on which they could recline."

The sentence may allude to silver doors and thrones since the word

“silver”

was employed in the preceding Verse but it is not reiterated herein.

It may also refer to numerous doors and thrones, with due consideration to the indefiniteness of

“doors and thrones”

mentioned herein to demonstrate significance, which indicate the glory of the palaces since modest houses do not require numerous doors and thrones.

Verse 35 further says:

“And adornments of gold,”

in other words, they were provided with embellishments of all kinds so that mundane and gaudy possessions, e.g. luxurious and multi-storey palaces with sliver roofs, doors and thrones and all kinds of adornments desired by mammon worshippers, be fully prepared for them.

However, they are all worldly possessions and the Hereafter belongs to the God fearing:

(***“Yet all this would have been nothing but an enjoyment of this world. And the Hereafter with your Lord is*** [***solely***] ***for the pious”***).

The word zukhruf in its literal sense indicates any type of adornments and embellishments with stylized floral motifs but since gold is the main means of adornment, the word zukhruf is also applied to it. Muzakhraf indicates idle talk because of the gaudiness and embellishment applied to it.

In short, mundane possessions and luxuries are so valueless before God that they should solely fall into lowly people like disbelievers in Truth and had people of weak faith and mammon worshippers not been inclined toward disbelief and faithlessness, God Almighty would have solely accorded them to such disliked and outcast people so that everyone would know that mundane substance is not the measure of human dignity.

Indeed, there is not any allegory more eloquent than the one mentioned in the preceding Verses in order to shatter false values and change a society whose standards of people’s merits rest on the number of one’s camels, cash money, maids and servants, houses and mansions, and luxurious adornments such that the appointment of Muhammad (S) who was a poor orphan to prophethood was a source of astonishment.

The best thing to do is to shatter such baseless standards and replace them with human values of fearing God and piety, knowledge, sacrifice, and courage otherwise none of the superficial and transient reforms will be of no avail.

The same was carried out in the best manner by the Islamic faith, the Holy Qur'an, and the Messenger of God (S); as a consequence of which a society that was regarded as the most underdeveloped and superstitious societies flourished in a brief span of time.

It would be of interest to know that a Prophetic tradition complements the aforesaid plan:

"If the world had any value before God as little as the wings of a fly, God would not have provided disbelievers with water to drink."[13]

The issue is eloquently expressed by 'Ali (as), the Commander of the Faithful, in the Qasi'a Sermon.

Reproaches of the sinful and concupiscent world in Qur'anic Verses and the traditions narrated from the Prophet's Household (as) are to found in tradition sources including: Nahj al-Balagha, Majlisi's Bihar, Usul al-Kafi, Jami' Ahadith al-Shi'a, Kanz al-Ummal, Saduq's Amali, Mahajjat al-Bayda', Ibn Abi 'l-Hadid's Commentary on Nahj al-Balagha, Mir'at al-Uqul, Ghazali's Ihya' al-Ulum, Mustadrak, Shaykh Mufid's Amali, Wasa'il al-Shi'a, Riyad al-Salihin, Madinat al-Balagha, Warram's Majmu'a ("Collection [of Traditions]"), Mishkat al-Anwar.

It is worthy of note that the Islamic Revolution is based on the revolution of values. As a consequence of losing the genuine values and because the values of the Age of Ignorance flourish anew among Muslims in modern times, they live in dire circumstances under the pressures of merciless and bloodthirsty enemies.

It is unfortunate that men are judged on the basis of worldly possessions. Knowledge, fear of God, and other virtues have been consigned to oblivion; they have sunk into mundane gaudy embellishments and have alienated themselves from the Islamic faith.

So long as the status quo is maintained, they have to pay dearly for their dire mistake. In such circumstances, they have to make drastic changes in the values preoccupying them in order to become prepared for Divine Favors being accorded to them

(***"Verily, Allah will not change the condition of a people as long as they do not change their state themselves** [**from evil to good**]**,"***[14]).

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 36 - 37

وَمَنْ يَعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهُ شَيْطَاناً فَهُوَ لَهُ قَرِينٌ

وَإِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّونَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

36. And whosoever turns away blindly from the remembrance of the Most Gracious [Allah], We appoint for him a devil to be a companion to him.
37. And verily, they [devils] hinder them from the Path [of Allah], but they think that they are guided.

The preceding Verses made mention of disbelievers sinking in worldly possessions but the Verses in question make a reference to one of the tokens of such sinking in gold and adornments.

It is to be noted that the

"companion"

may imply bad company, spouse, children, or partner. It is for the same reason that the indefinite for of Devil (Shaytanan) in ad hoc employed to include devils of all kind.

According to the preceding Verses, a devil will be appointed by God Almighty to be the companion of the one who turns away from reflection on Qur'anic Verses and turns to mundane preoccupations.

The two blessed Verses in question say that one who does not remember God and the Attributes of his Glory and does not reflect on Qur'anic Verses and Their secrets and delicacies so that the Truth of the Islamic faith becomes manifest to him will undoubtedly be occupied with falsehood and entertains satanic thought in his heart.

Such thought hinders the path of Truth and the passage of angels to his heart; as a consequence of which his heart turns into the camp of devils and man will have no other alternative to hinder the path of devils but to remember God and reflect on Divine Attributes and Creation and through Divine Aid may be able to hinder the path of devils.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S)[15] that had it not been for the devils surrounding man's heart, he would have taken a glance at the dominions of the heavens and the earth.

The Prophetic tradition indicates that any man is worthy of attainting to such station; however, when he is enslaved by his concupiscence, devils will take control of him surrounding his heart and blinding the eyes of his heart through which he is supposed to take a glance at the dominions of the heavens and the earth and discover spiritual truths.

It is to be noted that when one is entangled with the blindness and darkness of one's concupiscence, he will falsely imagine that he is on the right path whereas he is in error.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 38 - 39

حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَنَا قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ فَبِئْسَ الْقَرِينُ

وَلَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ إِذْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ

38.** [**Satan's companionship continues**] **till when** [**the sinner on Resurrection Day**] **comes unto Us saying** [**unto his companion, Satan,**] **"Would that between me and you were the distance of the east and west" – a worst** [**type of companion you were**] **indeed!
39.** [**But it will be said unto him**] **"It will profit you not** [**the wish to turn away from devils, since**] **you did wrong** [**and**] **that you will be sharers** [**you and devils**] **the chastisement.

On the Day of Resurrection, sinners wish they could distance from devils in Hell, but the Holy Qur'an says that they will share the chastisement with devils and they will not be apart.

Veils will be torn asunder on the Day of Resurrection and many a beloved will fall into disfavor and many an illusion and false belief will be manifest:

(***"but they think that they are guided"***).

The two blessed Verses indicate that sinners turn away from God Almighty as a consequence of which devils turn into their companions in this world until when they return to God Almighty in the Hereafter:

(***"till when** [**the sinner on Resurrection Day**] **comes unto Us"***)

and find themselves in chastisement together with the devils who were their company in this world.

Addressing their evil company they say:

"Would that between me and you were the distance of the east and west."

The word

***mashriqayn** (**"the two easts"**)*

may indicate the east and west since they are far from each other.

The word may designate preferential dual (taghlib) as is the case in "the two suns" (the sun, lit. "the sun and the moon," shamsayn) and "the two moons" (the moon, lit. "the moon and the sun," qamarayn). The two easts may also designate hibernal or wintry and estival or summery easts which stand far from each other.

In short, those who have turned away from God Almighty and Qur'anic verses and instead have taken devils as their company will be their companions in Hell but their regrets will be in vain, since they have lost their opportunities with which they were provided in the world.

Turning away from their Origin and Originator and enslaved by their concupiscence, they have provided Satan with the opportunity to ensnare them. They have done wrong to themselves and they have to

share Divine Chastisement with their company.

1. Majma' al-Bayan, the opening of the Chapter.
2. 26:214
3. 112:3-4
4. 39:9
5. 112:3
6. 2:171
7. Tafsir Burhan.
8. 21:53-54
9. 14:35
10. 2:124
11. Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, pp. 596-597; Tafsir Burhan, vol. 4, pp. 138-139.
12. 6:124
13. Kashshaf [Exegesis], vol. 4, p. 250.
14. 13:11
15. Makhzan al-'Irfan [Exegesis], p.25.

Surah al-Zukhruf, Verses 40 - 63

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 40

أَفَأَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ أَوْ تَهْدِي الْعُمْيَ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ

40. Can you** [**O Muhammad!**] **make the deaf to hear, or can you guide the blind or him who is in manifest error?

Divine Word may solely affect the God fearing who are alive at heart. The message of the Messenger of God (S) may not affect those who are not prepared to give ears to his words.

Addressing the Noble Prophet (S), thus the blessed Verse inquires him:

"Do you expect to make the deaf listen to you or can you guide the blind to the path of Guidance? Are you able to make those who are astray and tread the path of manifest error to turn toward the right path of the Islamic faith?

It is beyond your means. One whose heart is covered by the dark veil of neglect, vanity, and arrogance and the eyes and ears of his heart are blind and deaf may never be affected by Qur'anic Verses, the Divine Message revealed to the Messenger of God (S), so that he may proceed toward the Truth. It will be of no avail."

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 41 - 42

فَإِمَّا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ فَإِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُنْتَقِمُونَ

أَوْ نُرِيَنَّكَ الَّذِي وَعَدْنَاهُمْ فَإِنَّا عَلَيْهِمْ مُقْتَدِرُونَ

41. And when We take you away [***from among them***]***, We shall indeed take vengeance on them. 42. Or*** [***if you happen to be alive***] ***We show you that wherewith We threaten them: then verily We have perfect command over them.***

Disbelievers should not imagine that they will not be chastised so long as the Noble Prophet (S) is alive, or there will be no chastisement following his demise. By Divine Chastisement, Divine Just Recompense, rather than hatred and abhorrence as the source of human vengeance, is intended.

The blessed Verse is a consolation to the Prophet (S) saying that if God Almighty takes him to His Closeness of Mercy before his taking vengeance of disbelievers, He will take his vengeance of them.

It is also said that the Verse means that if God Almighty takes him from Mecca without his taking vengeance of Quraysh disbelievers, He will take vengeance of them on the day of the Battle of Badr.

It is mentioned in the Prophet's Household's (as) exegesis that God Almighty will take vengeance of them through 'Ali (as).1

Two points may be inferred from the blessed Verse in question.

Firstly, reference is made to the Noble Messenger of God (S) as

"a Mercy bestowed upon the world,"

since he tolerated all the polytheists' persecutions and it is unknown whether he ever cursed them but it is known that he asked God Almighty to bestow forgiving upon them through His Mercy and Favor.

It is mentioned in the Qur'an:

"Whether you [***O Muhammad (S)!***] ***ask forgiveness for them or ask not forgiveness for them*** [***and even***] ***if you ask seventy times for their forgiveness – Allah will not forgive them,"***2).

Secondly, the afflictions other than jihad inflicted on disbelievers by Divine Command might have been inconsistent with his noble disposition since Quraysh disbelievers were his kith and kin and despite their dire persecutions he did not wish for their being afflicted by Divine torment; as a consequence of which he is told that when we take you from the world or when you emigrate from Mecca God Almighty will

take vengeance of them which is confirmed by another Qur'anic Verse,

"And Allah would not chastise them while you are amongst them"[3].

Verse 42 is a consolation for the Noble Prophet (S) according to which God Almighty will take vengeance of them following his demise or emigration from Mecca to Medina.

It may also serve as a warning to Meccans to the effect that God Almighty will take His Messenger's (S) vengeance of them in his lifetime in the Battle of Badr or at a later time. God Almighty is Omnipotent and may take vengeance of them at any time.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 43 - 44

فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِي أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ إِنَّكَ عَلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

وَإِنَّهُ لَذِكْرٌ لَكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ وَسَوْفَ تُسْأَلُونَ

43. Therefore, hold you fast to that which is revealed to you. Indeed you are on the Straight Path. 44. And verily this [the Holy Qur'an] is indeed a Reminder [and a Glory] for you and your people and you will be questioned [about it].

One who is on the Right Path benefiting from Divine Revelation is supposed to be assiduous and of lively disposition in his work:

(***"hold you fast"***)

and he is supposed to entertain doubts regarding his true beliefs because of people's oppositions:

(***"Indeed you are on the Straight Path"***).

Addressing His Noble Prophet (S), God Almighty says unto him:

"O Muhammad (S)! Do not disturb your noble disposition by disbelievers' persistence in staying in error and the contemptuous words they say about you and hold fast to Qur'anic Verses and Divine Traditions revealed to you by God Almighty and be content that your are certainly on the Straight Path."

The antecedent of ***"this"*** (***inna-hu***) is the Holy Qur'an in which lie the glory, honor, and the Straight Path for you and your followers. You and your people will be asked about the Holy Qur'an before long on the Day of Resurrection.

The Divine Book is full of Wisdom and Beacons of the Path to human felicity and virtue and you will be

asked about what you did with Its instructions.

Surah al-Zukhruf – Verse 45

وَاسْأَلْ مَنْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُسُلِنَا أَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُونِ الرَّحْمَنِ آلِهَةً يُعْبَدُونَ

45. And ask those of Our Messengers [***through their followers or by consulting their Books***] ***whom We sent before you: "Did We ever appoint gods to be worshipped besides the Most Gracious*** [***Allah***]***?"***

Divine Unity is a dogmatic principle shared by all religions and the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) pursues the Call of his predecessors:

(***"And ask those of Our Messengers whom We sent before you"***).

To reject idolatry and polytheist beliefs, the blessed Verse in question says:

"Inquire of the messengers sent before you whether we asked them to worship gods other than the Most Gracious Allah."

The Verse is a reference to the messengers of God who called people to believe in Divine Unity and they decisively condemned polytheism en masse.

Therefore, the opposition of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) against idolatry was not unprecedented, but he solely revived his predecessors' long standing tradition; however, idolaters and polytheists proceed against the Path beaconed by all prophets.

According to the present exegesis it is the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) who was inquired about his predecessors, but all communities and even his opponents are asked the same question.

Those inquired include the followers of earlier prophets, their true and trustworthy adherents, or even laity among them, since their words lead to a unanimous assertion (khabar mutawatir) bearing testimony to the prophets' belief in Divine Unity.

It is to be noted that even those deviating from the dogma of Divine Unity, e.g. Christians of modern times believing in trinity, still discuss the question of Divine Unity saying that their trinity is not inconsistent with Divine Unity as a dogmatic principle shared by all prophets! Thus, inquiring from these peoples will suffice to negate polytheist claims.

Yet, some exegets also maintain that another possibility exists as to the interpretation of the Verse in question based on a number of traditions.[4]

It is also worthy of note that from among the Beautiful Divine Names,

"the Most Gracious" (***Rahman***)

receives emphasis in the Verse which makes references to the all inclusiveness of Divine Mercy and the fact that some people worship idols who engender neither gain nor loss.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 46 - 47

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَإِهِ فَقَالَ إِنِّي رَسُولُ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَضْحَكُونَ

46. And indeed We did send Moses with Our Ayat [***Signs, Miracles, Verses***] ***to Pharaoh and his chiefs. Then he said: "Indeed, I am a Messenger of the Lord of the world.***
47. But when he came to them with Our Ayat, they laughed at them [***Ayat and Miracles***].

Mention is again herein made of the story of Moses (as), Pharaoh, and the Children of Israel since the destiny of Moses (as) and his people resembles that of the Prophet of Islam (S) and the people of Mecca – Pharaoh made excuses about Moses' (as) poverty saying that he is the sovereign in Egypt and likewise the chiefs of Meccan disbelievers regarded the Prophet of Islam (S) poor and an orphan where as they considered themselves to be men of substance and dignity.

It is needless to say that mockery and derision indicates their opponents' lightheadedness and frivolity.

The two blessed Verses are revealed as a consolation to the Prophet of Islam (S) by which mention is made of the story of Moses (as) saying that God Almighty sent him with many a miracle, e.g. the walking stick that turned into a serpent, his hand that shined when he took it out of his armpit, locusts, lice, frogs, and blood serving as tokens of his Divine appointment to prophethood since he was ordered by the Lord of Creation to guide Pharaoh and the dignitaries of his land.

According to Verse 47, when Moses (as) said that he had been sent by the Lord of the World and presenting his walking stick and his shining hand as proofs of his prophethood, Pharaoh and his followers, instead of using their intellect to distinguish between sorcery and miracle and acknowledge his prophethood, derided him.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 48 - 50

وَمَا نُرِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ إِلَّا هِيَ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ أُخْتِهَا وَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا السَّاحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ إِنَّنَا لَمُهْتَدُونَ

فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُثُونَ

48. And not a miracle We showed them but it was greater than another and We seized them with torment in order that they might return [***to Monotheism***]***.***
49. And they said: "O you sorcerer! Invoke your Lord for us [***to remove the torment from us. Then, we***] ***will certainly acknowledge your guidance."***
50. But when [***because of Moses' invocation***] ***We removed the torment from them, they broke their covenant*** [***and disbelieved***]***.***

Sending down Divine Guidance precedes chastisement:

(*"and not a miracle We showed them"*).

Divine Wrath in this world is for people to return to Monotheism). Inasmuch as Pharaoh and his people waxed their disbelief and denial of truth, God Almighty made Moses (as) show them a greater miracle inflicting torments on them, e.g. swarms of locusts descended upon them.

Following supplications, they asked for a covenant to the effect that if the affliction be removed from them, they will believe, but after the removal of the affliction, they broke their covenant and persisted in their disbelief.

They were also afflicted with lice, frogs, blood in their water and the like in order that they may acknowledge Moses' (as) Call and return to Monotheism. Despite the diversity of Moses' (as) miracles, they all concerned natural phenomena, e.g. animate beings.

Likewise, other prophets presented their peoples with miracles. Though the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) presented miracles concerned with extraordinary phenomena but his main miracle is the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an revealing the Divine Dominion and the secrets of His Sovereignty through which man may acquaint himself with intangible worlds thanks to Which human soul and perception of truth may exceed the realm of natural phenomena and find acquaintance with the metaphysical world.

It is an intelligible matter that the world, particularly human species as they follow Allah's Laws constantly proceeds toward perfection and the Islamic faith is supposed to serve as Divine Guidance for mankind to the Resurrection Day; as a consequence of which Prophetic miracles are supposed to exceed natural and tangible phenomena and beacon man toward spirituality so that he may avail himself of Divine Guidance and everyone may benefit from this inimitable Divine Word on the basis of his faculties and capabilities; however, other prophets' miracles suited their contemporaries.

Verse 49 says that when Pharaoh's people were afflicted with torments, they took refuge with Moses

(as) and since common people were too ignorant to draw a distinction between miracle and sorcery, they regarded him as a great sorcerer and inquired of him to invoke his Lord and ask Him to remove the torments from them thanks to His covenant with him.

The covenant may refer to his prophethood, answering his invocation by his Lord, or the one according to which anyone opposing him will be afflicted with torment.

They asked Moses (as) to invoke his Lord to remove the torment from them so that they believe in his Call and find Guidance. Verse 50 says that when the torments were removed from them thanks to Moses' (as) invocations, they broke their covenant and persisted in their disbelief.

These are all lessons to be taken by Muslims and a consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) to preserver tirelessly despite his opponents' obduracy and animosity without entertaining hopelessness in his heart.

Muslims may hereby take a lesson from the story of Moses (as) and the Children of Israel who despite hardships attained to victory over Pharaoh and his people. It also serves as a warning to the obdurate enemies of Islam so that they may see the fate of disbelievers and take a lesson from their dire fate.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 51 - 52

وَنَادَى فِرْعَوْنُ فِي قَوْمِهِ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ أَلَيْسَ لِي مُلْكُ مِصْرَ وَهَذِهِ الْأَنْهَارُ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِي أَفَلا تُبْصِرُونَ

أَمْ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْ هَذَا الَّذِي هُوَ مَهِينٌ وَلا يَكَادُ يُبِينُ

51. And Pharaoh proclaimed among his people: "O my people! Is not mine the dominion of Egypt and these rivers flowing underneath* [*my palace*]*? See you not* [*my greatness*]*?"
52. "Am I not better than this one who is despicable and can scarcely express himself clearly?"

As mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, the clause:

"Am I not better" (***ana khayrun***)

is uttered by Iblis and Pharaoh. These two Verse clearly reveal fear, vainglory, despotism, vanity, false belief, reliance on worldly possessions, and the use of adornments which are characteristics of tyrants.

Having premonitions, tyrants make attempts at propaganda:

(***"And Pharaoh proclaimed"***).

Lacking logicality, tyrants rely on their palaces and worldly possessions;

(*"Is not mine the dominion of Egypt?"*).

The blessed Verse 51 says that when Pharaoh with his great power and glory failed to resist Moses (as) and noticed that Moses' (as) followers are on the increase, resorted to hypocrisy and ordered his men to gather people so that he may deceive them by his sovereignty and worldly possessions and make himself greater in their eyes.

Addressing the believing Children of Israel he said:

"Is not mine the dominion of Egypt and these rivers flowing underneath [***my palace***]***? Am I not better than this one who is despicable and can scarcely express himself clearly?"***

It is reported from some exegets in Atyab al-Bayan and Majma' al-Bayan that when God Almighty send Moses (as) to Pharaoh, he removed his stuttering, as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an:

"And loose the knot from my tongue"[5]

to whom God Almighty answered thus:

"You are granted your request, O Moses!"[6].

Pharaoh meant to remind people of former times and reveal Moses' (as) speech defect.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 53 - 54

فَلَوْلا أُلْقِيَ عَلَيْهِ أَسْوِرَةٌ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ أَوْ جَاءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلائِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِينَ

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَأَطَاعُوهُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْماً فَاسِقِينَ

53. "[***If Moses is in the right***] ***whey then are not golden bracelets bestowed on him or*** [***as a proof of his prophethood***] ***angels sent along with him?"***
54. Thus he [***Pharaoh***] ***belittled his people and they obeyed him. Indeed they were a people who were disobedient*** [***to Allah***].

One who lacks sensibility resorts to worldly possessions and adornments and regards such possessions as a token of truthfulness and the lack of the same as a sign of falsehood:

(*"*[***If Moses is in the right***] ***whey then are not golden bracelets bestowed on him"***).

It is the job of tyrants to make attempts at weakening Divine leadership and resorting to befooling others.

Blind devotion and obedience have their roots in cultural poverty, narrow mindedness, and superficiality:

(*“Thus he belittled his people and they obeyed him”*).

Verse 53 says that Pharaoh adds to his idle words saying that if Moses (as) is Divinely appointed to prophethood, why is he not wearing gold bracelets.

It is said that whoever was vested with governorship at the hand of Pharaoh, he would receive a gold bracelet and necklace and such adornments served as tokens of his rule.

He uttered such baseless words to show that Moses (as) did not deserve prophethood since he neither had worldly possessions nor did invisible beings like angels accompanied him to render him aid thereby he questioned adherence to him.

According to Verse 54, having deceived his people and hindered them from using their reason by his baseless words, they compared Divine honor with mundane glory as the majority of common people at any time make no distinction between true spiritual honor and the mundane and untrue one unaware of the truth that Divine honor whose perfect representation is prophethood springs from another source.

Surah al-Zukhruf – Verses 55 – 56

فَلَمَّا آسَفُونَا انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفاً وَمَثَلاً لِلْآخِرِينَ

55. Therefore, when they angered Us, We chastised them and drowned all of them.
56. And We made them an [***evil***] ***precedent and an example to later generations.***

At times, people see their recompense in this world besides the one on the Day of Resurrection:

(*“*[***We***] ***drowned all of them”***).

In the sphere of rebellion and exceeding bounds, those who issue and obey orders meet their dire end together:

(***“all of them”***).

Divine Wrath and Vengeance is for the sake of man’s deeds. History bears witness to the fact that destruction of tyrannical rules is an inevitable Divine Law:

(***“And We made them an*** [***evil***] ***precedent and an example to later generations.”***

In these Verses, God Almighty informs his Prophet (S) that when Pharaoh went to extremes in his

rebellion and disobedience and angered God Almighty and Divinely appointed prophets, vengeance was taken of him and his followers and they were all drowned.

Verse 56 says that God Almighty set them a precedent and an example for disbelievers of later generations so that they learn that God is Wrathful and takes vengeance of disbelievers and is the Most Gracious Lord at the time of Mercy.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 57 - 60

وَلَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ مَثَلاً إِذَا قَوْمُكَ مِنْهُ يَصِدُّونَ

وَقَالُوا أَآلِهَتُنَا خَيْرٌ أَمْ هُوَ مَا ضَرَبُوهُ لَكَ إِلَّا جَدَلاً بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُونَ

إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ مَثَلاً لِبَنِي إِسْرائيلَ

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَلائِكَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ يَخْلُفُونَ

57. And when the son of Mary (as) is quoted [by idolaters] as an example [that if objects of worship besides God will go to Hell, He will go there as well], your people cried out derisively [at the example].
58. And said: "Are your gods better or is he [better]? [If Jesus (as) who is better than our objects of worship is in Hell, ending up in Hell is neither important to us nor to our objects of worship.] They quoted not the above example except for argument but they are a quarrelsome people.
59. He [Jesus (as)] was not more than a servant. We granted Our Favor to him and We made him an example for the Children of Israel.
60. And if it were Our Will, We would have made angels to replace you on the earth.

Upon the revelation of:

"Disbelievers and the objects of worship [besides Allah] are fuel for Hell!"[7]***,***

the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) was asked:

"If it is true, Jesus (as) and Ezra (as) are the objects of worship for Christians and Jews and according to the Verse, they will be the fuel for Hell! If Jesus (as) is in Hell, We and our idols wish to be admitted to Hell."

Disbelievers cried out derisively.

The Noble Prophet (S) replied:

"Objects of worship from amongst men who wish to be worshipped, like Pharaoh, will go to Hell, but Jesus (as) and Ezra (as) never wished to be worshipped."

There are many reports narrated by exegets regarding the point in question,8 the summary of their contents is that the Noble Prophet (S) said:

"'Ali (as) among my people is like Jesus (as) son of Mary among his people."

His people dislike his words and uttered words mentioned in the following Verse.

The Noble Prophet (S) means that Jesus' (as) followers divided into three sects:

1. A Jewish sect that turned into Jesus' (as) bitterest enemies, hated him, and attributed false claims to him

2. A Christian sect that went to the extreme regarding him and regarded him as the Son of God and God Himself

3. A moderate sect that regarded him as the Arch-prophet, the Messenger of God, and God's servant.

The first two sects went to extreme and became disbelievers and were condemned to torments in Hell. The third sect found deliverance and felicity. Likewise, a sect was the bitterest enemy of 'Ali (as) and even attributed disbelief to him, e.g. tyrants, Ummayads, and Kharijis.

They entertained hatred against 'Ali (as) and on the tenth day ('Ashura) of Muharrum said unto Abi 'Abd Allah (as):

"Verily, we will enter into battle with you out of hatred in the same manner that we did with your father and what we did in the Battles of Badr and Hunayn."

The second sect went to the extreme and regarded 'Ali (as) as the creator of the heavens and the earth. These two sects share their torment in Hell.

The third sect regard him as Imam and the immediate successor of the Noble Prophet (S) and consider 'Ali's (as) eleven male offspring as the Imams and people's Guide after the Prophet (S).

They neither innovate anything in matters of religion nor do they deny the dogmatic principles. They act upon the religion of Islam and form the moderate community of Muslims who enjoy deliverance and felicity.

Regarding:

"And when the son of Mary (as) is quoted"

it is also said that the:

"quoter" (darib)

is the Noble Prophet and the similitude or example (mathal) is the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as), who is likened to Jesus (as) son of Mary among the two communities in terms of beliefs in them.

"Your people cried out derisively [at the example]"

makes a reference to the hypocrites around the Noble Prophet (S) who were disbelievers outwardly Muslims and inwardly polytheists.

"Cried out derisively"

refers to disbelievers' hatred against the Noble Prophet (S) and the Islamic faith and their likening 'Ali (as) to Jesus (as).

"Crying out loudly derisively" (yasiddun)

indicates disbelievers' hatred and animosity to such extent that they liken 'Ali (as) to Jesus (as). The above is reported by Hafis Abu Bakr ibn Mardiwayh, the eminent Sunni scholar, in his Manaqib.[9]

According to Verse 58, polytheists said:

"Are our gods better or is he [better]?"

They quoted not the above example except for argument but they are a quarrelsome people. The antecedent of the pronoun ***"he" (am huwa)*** is a rhetorical question denoting that their idols are better than Jesus (as), since Jesus (as) is an ordinary human being undeserving divinity like other human beings.

The reply to their rhetorical question is that your idols are pieces of wood or metal undeserving to be worshipped like other pieces of wood and metal. Jesus (as) possessed understanding, perception, distinction, and he could move whereas your idols lack the same, since man stands above animals, plants, and inanimate objects in the hierarchy of existence. Some exegets maintain that the antecedent of the pronoun:

"he"

is the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (as) asking why the Noble Prophet (S) did likened 'Ali (as) to Jesus (as) so that some believe in him and some fail to do so.

Why did he not liken him to our idols so that some of us believe in their divinity and some fail to do so? The reply to the question may be thus provided: firstly, regarding your idols there are two sects.

Polytheists believe in their divinity but some people fail to do so saying that they are no more than pieces of metal and wood fashioned by you.

There were three sects regarding Jesus (as) and ‘Ali (as), two of whom went to the extreme and one treading the path of moderation.

Secondly, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) believed that Jesus (as) was an Arch-prophet and the spirit of God and worked wonders such as reviving the dead, healing incurable diseases, e.g. leprosy and blindness, whereas idols made no effects. The Noble Prophet (S) intended to say that the rank of ‘Ali (as) is as elevated as that of Arch-angels even more elevated than them.

“They quoted not the above example except for argument.”

Disbelievers roused disputations to abrogate truth and substantiate falsehood in the same manner that they made attempts to attribute sorcery, lying, and the like to the Noble Prophet of Islam (S).

“But they are a quarrelsome people.”

They uttered such idle talk out of their animosity toward the Noble Prophet of Islam (S), but if they had distinction and could perceive the truth, they would not be ensnared in such error.

According to Verse 59,

“He [Jesus (as)] was not more than a servant. We granted Our Favor to him and We made him an example for the Children of Israel.”

It is said in Verse 60 that in the same manner that We could create a son without father,

“if it were Our Will,”

We have the Power to destroy you and

“make angels to replace you on the earth.”

Angels who obey Divine Decree know nothing but to obey Him.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 61 - 62

وَإِنَّهُ لَعِلْمٌ لِلسَّاعَةِ فَلا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا وَاتَّبِعُونِ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

وَلا يَصُدَّنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

61. And he [***Jesus*** (***as***) ***as he raised the dead***] ***will be a known sign for*** [***the coming of***] ***the Hour*** [***Day of Resurrection***]***. Therefore have no doubt concerning it*** [***the Day of Resurrection***]***. And follow Me*** [***Allah***]***. This is the Straight Path.***
62. And let not Satan hinder you [***from the Path to God***]***. Indeed, he is a plain enemy to you.***

Against the polytheists' false belief that regarded Jesus (as) an example for objects of worship besides God, the blessed Verse 61 makes mention of Jesus (as) as one of the signs of the coming of the Day of Resurrection.

He was born of a virgin mother that bears testimony to Divine Omnipotence to raise the dead on the Day of Resurrection as he did the same in this world and he will descend from the heaven as a prelude to Resurrection.

The Verse makes a reference to another characteristic of Jesus (as):

"he will be a known sign for [***the coming of***] ***the Hour*** [***Day of Resurrection***]***."***

His birth from a virgin mother indicates Divine Omnipotence in whose light there will be no room for questions concerning life after death. On the basis of numerous Islamic traditions, the descent of Jesus Christ (as) will occur in the Last Days and will serve as the coming of Resurrection Day.

The blessed Verse proceeds with the clause

"Therefore have no doubt concerning it [***the Day of Resurrection***]***."***

People are warned against neglect of Resurrection in terms of beliefs and practice:

"And follow Me [***Allah***]***. This is the Straight Path."***

God's Path is the straightest path treading which will make you aware of the risks and the way of deliverance from error and perils on the Day of Resurrection. The following Verse informs people that Satan wishes to keep you in ignorance and neglect.

Be alert lest

"Satan may hinder you from treading the Path to God"

and attending to your fate, since

"he is a plain enemy to you."

He showed his animosity toward you when he tempted your parents, Adam and Eve and had them expelled from Paradise and once more, he took an oath to lead all the children of Adam, except

"sincere believers,"

into error. How could you stay dormant against such sworn enemy of yours and let him subjugate your hearts and hinder you from the Path toward God through his constant temptations?

We close the exegesis of Verse 61 with a citation from the exegetic work titled Atyab al-Bayan:

"And he will be a known sign for** [**the coming of**] **the Hour** [**Day of Resurrection**]**."

Exegets vary on the antecedent of the pronoun:

"he"

some of whom, based on the apparent meaning of the Verse, hold that the antecedent is Jesus (as), i.e., the descent of Jesus (as) from the heaven is one of the signs and prerequisites of the coming of the Hour, namely Resurrection Day.

Following the advent of Imam Mahdi (as), the Twelfth Shi'i Imam ("the Remainder of God," Baqiyat Allah), Jesus (as) will descend from the heaven to establish prayer with the Imam, be appointed as his vizier, and slay Sufyani in Jerusalem. Four living prophets, Edris (Enoch [AS]), Jesus (as), Khidr (as), and Ilyas (Eliah [AS]) will appear at that time.

"The knowledge of the Hour" (***'ilm li-'l-sa'a***)

denotes the sign for Resurrection as one of the prerequisites of the advent of Imam Mahdi (as). Nonetheless, according to a number of traditions narrated from Jabir and Imam Sadiq (as), the antecedent of the pronoun

"he"

is the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali (as) and it may make a reference to the return of Imam 'Ali (as) in the third stage in which devils will be slain.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 63

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُونِ

63. And when Jesus** (**as**) **came with clear proofs** [**and miracles**]**, he said: "I have come to you with Wisdom and** [**I have come**] **to make clear to you some of the** [**points**] **in which you differ. Therefore fear Allah and obey me.

Prophets came with clear, convincing, logical, and undistortable proofs and many a miracle:

(***"Jesus** (**as**) **came with clear proofs** [**and miracles**]**"***).

Following the points mentioned above, the blessed Verse in question informs us that when Jesus son of Mary (as) was Divinely appointed to prophethood, he worked many a miracle, e.g. raising the dead and making a bird out of clay thanks to Divine Omnipotence and blowing into it causing its flight. Based on such proofs he informed the Children of Israel of his prophethood and his Divine appointment for their guidance.

He said that his words had been based on wisdom and truth and he had brought the Bible in order to remove the differences existing between them and help them to draw a distinction between truth and falsehood. Addressing the Children of Israel, he asked them to abstain from opposition to Divine Command but acknowledge and obey It.

1. Abu 'l-Futuh Razi's Tafsir ("Exegesis").
2. 9:80
3. 8:33
4. For further information, see the Exegeses by Qurtubi, Fakhr al-Din Razi, Nur al-Thiqalayn, Majma' al-Bayan, Ihtijaj, and the Exegesis by 'Ali ibn Ibrahim.
5. 20:27
6. 20:36
7. 21:98
8. For further information, see Shi'i and Sunni exegetic sources, e.g. Kulayni and Shaykh Óusi in Kafi, Ibn Babiwayh in Tahdhib, and Ibn Maghazili in Manaqib.
9. Apud Kashf al-Ghumma, p. 95. The same point, with minor alterations, is mentioned in Mir Muhammad Salih Kashfi Tirmidhi's Manaqib Murtadawi. Some other eminent Sunni and Shi'i scholars cite the same report with or without the blessed Verse in question. For further information, see Ihqaq al-Haqq, vol. 3, p. 398 ff.; Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 4, p. 609 ff.; Majma' al-Bayan [Exegesis], under the blessed Verses in question.

Surah al-Zukhruf, Verses 64- 89

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 64 - 65

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمٍ أَلِيمٍ

64. Verily Allah! He is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is the Straight Path.
65. But the sects from among themselves differed. So woe to those who do wrong from the torment of a painful Day.

The main message of Jesus (as) is to call people to Monotheism. God, the Creator of all beings is solely worthy of worship.

The blessed Verse 64 says that He is truly my Lord and your Lord. Only worship Him. It is the Straight Path which finally leads to Closeness to God Almighty.

The pronoun:

***"he"* (*huwa*)**

is one of the Most Beautiful Divine Names whose antecedent is Allah.

It refers to the Indivisible or Non-Composite (basit) Being who is Imperceptible through human senses. He is your Lord and my Lord and we are solely supposed to obey Him so that through such obedience to Him you may attain to excellence and felicity and His Infinite Mercy.

Verse 65 refers to the point that following the Call of the prophets with their indubitable proofs, wise sayings, scriptures, and many a miracles each of which bear testimony to the truth of their call, woe to those who have done wrong to themselves and deserve excruciating torment for their opposition to prophetic calls.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 66 - 67

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لا يَشْعُرُونَ

الْأَخِلَّاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

66. Do they only wait for the Hour that it shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware?
67. Friends on that Day will be foes to each other except the pious.

The Day of Resurrection shall come all of a sudden and no one is aware of the Hour of its occurrence:

(*"It shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware"*).

All friendships not based on piety and fear of God will turn into enmity:

(*"Friends on that Day will be foes to each other except the pious"*).

The preceding Verses made mention of obdurate idolaters, deviants, and polytheists of the people of Jesus (as) and the Verses in question depict their end. Verse 66 says:

“Do they only wait for the Hour that it shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware?”

The rhetorical question expresses the real circumstances of such people according to which those who do not listen to anyone providing advice out of one’s kind heart and thereby paves the path for his perdition.

In this respect, it is said that such a person waits for his own death! The word ***“Hour”*** (***sa’a***) in this Verse and many other Verses indicate the Day of Resurrection, the happenings of which occur immediately as if they all happen in one single hour. However, the word at times signifies the last moment of the world. Since the two meanings are not too far from each other, it may indicate both.

The coming of the Day of Resurrection to occur all of a sudden is depicted in the blessed Verse in question. Two points are here raised: firstly, its sudden occurrence (baghtatan), and secondly, people being uninformed of the hour of its occurrence.

It is needless to say that something may suddenly occur but we are informed of it beforehand and prepare ourselves to encounter its aftermath; however, it would be unfortunate when a dire incident occurs all of a sudden and we happen to be totally unaware of its occurrence.

The sinful live in such state, in other words, they are caught by surprise to the extent that according to some traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S):

“The hour shall come when (*people are preoccupied with their daily affairs*) *men milk ewes and* [*other*] *me unroll fabric* [*for trade*]*;”*

then the Noble Prophet (S) recited the blessed Verse:

‘Do they only wait for the Hour that it shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware?’”[1]

It would be very painful to be unaware of an irretrievable occurrence and be caught in surprise.

Verse 67 depicts the state of the friends extending their hands toward each other in pursuit of corruption and the gaudy mammon saying:

“Friends on that Day will be foes to each other except the pious.”

The word:

akhilla’ (***“friends”***)

is the plural form of khalil (“friend”) derives from khulla (“friendship”).

Depicting the scenes of the Day of Resurrection, the Verse in question clearly reveals that the word:

"Hour"

also used in the preceding Verse indicates the Day of Resurrection, when all bonds of friendship break off unless those established for God and in His Name.

It is natural that such friendships turn into enmity on that Day since each and every of them reckons the other as the one leading him to misfortune and hopelessness, saying:

"You showed me the wrong way and called me to tread it. You were the one who embellished the world for me and encouraged me to be preoccupied with its gaudy adornments. You made me sink in neglect, ignorance, and vanity and thereby made me unaware of my dire end."

Yet, the bonds of friendship of the pious are everlasting since they are established on everlasting values whose fruitful consequences shall be more evident on the Day of Resurrection and thereby they place them on a firmer basis.

It is natural that friends render assistance to each other in daily life and if their friendship be based on evil and corruption they will be accomplices in their sins and crimes; however if their friendship be based on good and discretion, they will be associates in recompense. Therefore, it is not surprising to know that the former will turn into enmity and the latter into firmer friendship.

It is reported from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Know that any friendship which is not for God will turn into enmity and animosity on the Day of Resurrection."[2]

The following Verse is actually an interpretation of the characteristics and states of the God fearing pious and a depiction of their glorious fate. God will thus address them on the Day of Resurrection:

"O My servants! Today you do not have to entertain neither fear nor grief."

What an interesting message! A Message which is immediately sent by God to humanity opening with the best depictions:

"O Allah's servants!"

The Message removes the worst concern on that Day, a Message that removes all past grieves from hearts. This Message bears the four aforesaid merits.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 68 - 70

يَا عِبَادِ لا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ

ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُونَ

68. [God says unto them:] My servants! No fear shall be on you this Day, nor shall you grieve.
69. Those who believe in Our Ayat [Verses, Signs, Proofs] and are submitted [to Truth] at all times.
70. Enter Paradise, you and your wives in happiness.

Submission to the Will of God Almighty guarantees security from fears and perils on the Day of Resurrection.

Serenity will precede benefiting from Bounties in Paradise:

(“No fear shall be on you this Day, nor shall you grieve”).

Having faith is insufficient; we have to be totally submitted to Divine Will.

The phrase:

“O servants!”

in the blessed Verse in question is addressed to the God fearing pious admitting them to Paradise on the Day of Resurrection free of excruciating grieves and fears of torments and afflictions experienced by people in this world.

Such believers do not have to entertain sorrow for their past lives since they did not waste their mundane life. They will neither regret nor grieve on the Day of Judgment. The Verse proceeds with saying that the pious shall benefit from Divine Infinite Mercy and Bounties.

Verse 69 makes a reference to certain characteristics of God’s servants who are praised for worshipping God. Those are the ones who believed in Divine Signs (or Verses, i.e., the Holy Qur’an) and totally and unconditionally submitted to His Commands and Injunctions imparted to them through His Messenger, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah (S).

These God fearing, pious, and endeared servants are further depicted by two more clauses, i.e.,

*“Those who believed in Our Ayat and submitted to our Command.”*3

They are those who are addressed by such glorious appellations and benefit from such divine Bounties. In fact, the two aforesaid clauses provide a precise depiction of their belief and practice. Faith (iman) specifies the firm bases of their beliefs and submission to the Will of God (islam) explicates their act of submission to Divine Commands and Injunctions.

Verse 70 says:

“Enter Paradise”

which is addressed to the pious by the Most Gracious and All-Great Allah. Thus, their host is actually God who invited His company and now is asking them to enter Paradise.

Then mention is made of the first Bounty to be bestowed upon them, i.e.,

“you and your wives.”

It is evident that being with faithful and kind spouses is a source of pleasure for both men and women since they were their partners in mundane sorrows and now they may be their partners in happiness in the Hereafter.

The Verse further says unto believers that they may enjoy happiness such that your faces may be illumined by it.

The verb form:

tuhbarun (***lit. “you are happy”***)

derives from hibr (“compose thoughts effectively) and at times it is employed in the sense of the features of happiness reflected in countenance.

The word hibr (pl. ahbar) is also used to refer to scholars since they affect human societies, as it is reported from the Command of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as):

*“Scholars will live to the end of the world, their persons will be lost but their works will live on in hearts.”*4

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 71

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

71. Vessels and cups of gold will be passed round them; [***there will be***] ***therein all that inner-selves could desire and all that eyes could delight in and you will abide therein forever.***

The words ***sihaf*** (plural form of sahfa) and akwab (plural form of kub) are applied to “large vessels” and “goblets” respectively.

It is to be noted as well that the pleasures of the eye will be in harmony with other wishes of the people of Paradise:

(“eyes could delight”).

The blessed Verse promises believers that they will enjoy all kinds of Divine and luxurious Bounties reserved for them in Paradise, e.g. gold bowls and jars and the Bounties of the people of Paradise are generally divided into three kinds:

1. Whatever the inner-selves of the people of Paradise wish shall be prepared for them

2. They shall enjoy all the pleasures of the soul and flesh

3. The last one which is the highest of Bounties is that the people of Paradise shall reside there forever.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 72 - 73

وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

72. This is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of your deeds which you used to do.
73. Therein for you will be fruits in plenty of which you will eat.

According to traditions, God has specified for each person a place in Hell and another place in Paradise.

The people of Paradise inherit the place of the people of Hell in Paradise and the people of Hell inherit the place of the people of Paradise in Hell.5

The issue of inheriting Paradise in mentioned in different Verses, an instance of which is:

“These are indeed the inheritors who shall inherit Paradise and dwell in it forever”6.

To make it clear that so many Bounties in Paradise are bestowed upon the

God fearing for their deeds, the blessed Verse 72 says:

“This is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit.”

It is of interest to learn that on the one hand the recompense of past deeds are mentioned and on the other hand mention is made of

“inheritance”

which usually denotes some gain fallen into someone’s share with no pain at all. It demonstrates the fact that human deeds serve as the pivot of his deliverance but what he receives for them far exceeds the recompense of his deeds.

Some exegets maintain that the allegory makes a reference to what mentioned above according to which for each and every person two dwelling places are reserved in Paradise and in Hell; people of Paradise inherit the place reserved in Paradise for the people of Hell and the people of Hell inherit the place reserved in Hell for the people of Paradise!

Verse 73 makes mention of the fruits of Paradise which are amongst the best Divine Bounties, saying:

“Therein for you will be fruits in plenty of which you will eat.”

According to a tradition:

“No one picks up the fruits of trees in Paradise unless two folds shall grow instead of them.”[7]

Such Bounties constitute some of the invigorating Bounties in Paradise to be granted to those who are faithful and do righteous good deeds.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 74 - 76

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ

لا يُفَتَّرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ

74. Indeed sinners will be in the torment of Hell to abide therein forever.
75. [***The torment***] ***will not be lightened for them and they will be plunged into destruction with deep regrets, sorrows, and in despair therein.***
76. We wronged them not, but they were wrong-doers.

The verbal form:

***mublisun* (*“they grieve in despair”*)**

derives from iblas (“grief with despair”). The word Iblis may also connote that he is hopeless of Divine Mercy. The blessed Verse 74 says that human evil deeds will take him to Hell and Divine Chastisement is fair.

Whenever the Holy Qur’an mentions the Bounties promised to believers, it usually warns disbelievers to torments and au contraire, whenever It warns disbelievers against torments, It promises believers that they will be granted Bounties in Paradise.

The reason may lie in the fact that man should at all times stay between awe and hope; as a consequence of which the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is by Divine Word, a mercy to the world but at the same time is a bearer of good tidings and a warner.

It is to be noted in the mean time that believers will enjoy infinite Bounties and will stay in Paradise forever; au contraire, disbelievers and sinners will taste many a torment in Hell and will stay there for good.

The following Verse says that their torment will not be lightened and they will lose their hope for deliverance.

Verse 76 serves as a reminder as per which it is not to be imagined that those who will be admitted to paradise to enjoy the Bounties there had some inborn quality and they did not struggle willfully to do righteous good deeds; au contraire, it may not be supposed that those who will end up in Hell to be afflicted with such torments had some inborn defect in them and they did not commit evil deeds without their will.

This is the false belief maintained by Ash’aris which is inconsistent with Divine Justice. Had it been like this, evil doers would have been wronged. Yet, The Essence of Divine Unity is far from chastising His weak servant because of his inborn quality driving him to committing sins.

Therefore, God Almighty reminds the people of Hell and torment in many a Qur’anic Verse that He did not wrong them but they did wrong knowingly and out of their own will as a consequence of which they deserve chastisement which is fair. It is through His Justice that everything is placed in order and thanks to His boundless Mercy, He may forgive anyone He wills.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 77

وَنَادَوْا يَا مَالِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَاكِثُونَ

77. And they will cry: “O Keeper* [*of Hell*]*! Let your Lord make an end of us.” He will say: “Indeed

***you shall abide forever** [**and there shall be no death**].”*

The inhabitants of Hell ask for assistance from anyone.

At times, they ask help from believers:

“Look at us so that we may use your light?”

and at times they extend their hands toward tyrant chiefs:

“Would you deliver us from Divine Wrath?”

They sometimes beseech the keepers of Hell to render them aid. They ask them to make an end of them, but it will be of no avail.

The blessed Verse in question says that the people of Hell seek refuge with the keeper of Hell out of the severity of torment and ask them in supplication:

“‘O Keeper** [**of Hell**]! **Let your Lord make an end of us.’ He will say: ‘Indeed you shall abide forever.’”

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 78 - 80

لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ

أَمْ أَبْرَمُوا أَمْراً فَإِنَّا مُبْرِمُونَ

أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلَى وَرُسُلُنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

78. Verily, We have brought the truth to you, but most of you have a hatred for the truth.
79. Or have they plotted some plan? Then We too are planning.
***80. Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsel?** [**Yes We do**] **and Our messengers are by them, to record** [**everything**].*

God Almighty is the Origin of Truth and angles are responsible for recording the recompense of acknowledging the Truth or failing to do so.

Divine recompense is consistent with our deeds and He will not chastise anyone without carrying out evil deeds or making decisions to commit them:

(*“Or have they plotted some plan?”*).

Disbelievers unknowingly imagine that God Almighty is unaware of their secret plans. The first two Verses confirm the preceding Verse to the effect that the Essence of Divine Unity addresses disbelievers and in reply to those of them who seek deliverance says that He clarified for them the Path of Truth in this world; in other words, He sent His Messengers to guide them but they disliked to follow the Straight Path.

They not only failed to acknowledge the Message imparted to them by prophets but also they persisted in their opposition to and denial of Divine Word and made attempts at their persecution; as a consequence of which God Almighty rendered their torment more severe and the same bears testimony to the fact that Divine Retribution is consistent with human deeds.

Verse 80 asks disbelievers whether they imagine that God Almighty is unaware of their secrets and inward hatred and opposition to the Message and what they whisper into the ears of each other. Then it provides the reply saying that it is not as they have imagined since if they hear the words of each other and they are unaware of what they entertain in their hearts, God Almighty hears their words and is aware of their secrets and see their deeds. He is well informed of their oppositions to Muslims and their secret counsels and the most noble of recorders (kiram al-katibin), i.e., the angels in charge of recording human words and deeds, are present at your side and listen and record whatever they say or they do.

The All-Hearing (sami’) and the All-Seeing (basir) are two of the Most Beautiful Divine Names. It is also said that the two Divine Names indicate His Pre-eternal Knowledge, i.e., His Omniscience embraces all intelligible phenomena.

As mentioned above, the two Divine Names may also allude to the fact that whatever you perceive through your senses of vision and hearing is known through Divine Immediate Knowledge (‘ilm huduri) since all contingent beings are embraced by His Omniscience:

(*“Nothing is excluded from His Knowledge even if it be an iota in the heaven or on the earth”*).

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 81 - 82

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

81. [*O Prophet* (*S*)] *say: “If the Most Gracious* [*Allah*] *had a child, then I am the first of Allah’s worshippers* [*to respect that child*].

82. Glorified is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne! Exalted is He from all that they ascribe* [*to Him*]*.

The Creator of the world is needless of children and whenever there is any word concerning any possible defect of Him, we are supposed to glorify Him. In the preceding Verses, particularly the opening Ones, mention was made of Arab polytheists who reckoned angels as Allah's daughters and the foregoing Verses included accounts of Jesus (as) and his Call to people concerning Divine Unity and obedience to Him.

The blessed Verses in question negate these false beliefs from another viewpoint saying:

"If the Most Gracious* [*Allah*] *had a child, then I am the first of Allah's worshippers* [*and I were the first person to respect the child and to obey him*]*."

The theme of Verse 81 is intricate to a number of Qur'anic exegets as a consequence of which they have resorted to different justifications some of which sound quite queer; nonetheless, the Verse is by no means intricate.

It is a method of interest employed in confronting obdurate people.

An instance of employing the method would be when someone falsely claims that a certain individual is a man of knowledge but he is not so, we might say that had he been knowledgeable, we would have been the first people to follow him so that he may reflect upon his false claim and make attempts at finding an argument to substantiate it and when he fails to produce such argument, he may be awakened from his neglect.

It is also worthy of note that

***"serve"* (*'a-b-d*)**

is not employed everywhere in the sense of "worship" and at times it is used in the senses of "obey; respect" and it is used ad hoc in the latter sense.

Verse 82 clearly rejects these false claims saying:

"Glorified is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne! Exalted is He from all that they ascribe* [*to Him*]*."

The Creator and Possessor of the heavens and the earth is the Lord of the Great Throne is needless of children since His Existence is Infinite, Embracing all the world of being. He is the Creator of the world of creation.

Children are required by those who die and beget children to continue their progeny. Children are needed by those who need aid and company at the time of incapacity and solitude. Finally, children

indicate corporeality and contingence. The Creator of the Throne, the heaven and the earth has no need for children.

"Lord of the Throne" (***rabb al-'arsh***)

follows

"Lord of the heaven and the earth" (***rabb al-samawat wa 'l-ard***)

is an instance of enumeration of the general following the specific, since

"Divine Throne"

implies the world of existence which is ruled by God Almighty.

It is also possible that

"the Throne"

alludes to the metaphysical world as the opposite of

"the heavens and the earth."

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 83

فَذَرْهُمْ يَخُوضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّى يُلاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

83. So leave them [***these idle talkers alone***] ***to speak nonsense and play until they meet the Day which they have been promised.***

God Almighty usually provides the unworthy with respite and leaves them alone for some time following sending down Guidance. When producing arguments and warnings be of no effect, the other party is supposed to be left alone in the same manner that a kind physician desperately leaves his obdurate patient alone.

The blessed Verse in question is addressed to the Messenger of God (S) asking him to leave alone the ignorant people preoccupied with mundane affairs who regard the Creator of the world to natural phenomena and attribute false ascriptions to Him.

They may not be guided; therefore, leave them alone to be immersed in vanity until the Day of Resurrection arrives which has been promised to them.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 84 - 85

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَٰهٌ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَٰهٌ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ

وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

84. It is He Who is the only God worshipped in the heaven and the only God to be worshipped on the earth and He is the All-Wise, the Omniscient.
85. And Blessed is He Whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them and with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour and to Whom you will be returned.

He Who possesses Infinite Knowledge and Wisdom is worthy of being worshipped. The blessed Verse 84 says that the Creator of the heaven and the earth is the One Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

He has placed everything in its proper place in the precise system of creation and He is Fully Aware of the generation and corruption of worldly phenomena and His Immediate Knowledge embraces everything and all entities in this world are under His Guardianship.

Qur'anic exegets ad hoc take

"God"

in the sense of Object of Worship and maintain that God is the One Who is the Creator and the Object of Worship of the inhabitants of the heavens, the earth, and the Throne.

The word:

"God"

may allude to Divinity and Creativeness since God Almighty, praise be to Him, is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and their inhabitants and is also their Breeder and Educator as it may be comprehended from the close of the Verse:

(***"He is the All-Wise, the Omniscient"***)

since His creation is based on His Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge and a firm basis and it is done in the best possible manner.

Verse 85 indicates Divine Greatness, Sovereignty, and Majesty saying that the Almighty is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and whatever exists between them and they are all embraced by his Infinite

Sovereignty and Almightiness. He is of Everlasting and Boundless Bounties.

"And with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour,"

i.e., He is the only One Who is aware of the hour of Resurrection and restoration and return of all things in within his Almightiness.

The blessed Verse in question enumerates five Divine Attributes, namely Lordship, Divinity, Wisdom, Knowledge, and Possession [of all things]. These five Divine Attributes include all Most Beautiful Divine Names and His other Names branch off from these five Attributes.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 86

وَلا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

***86. And those whom they invoke instead of Him have no power of intercession – except for those who bear witness to the truth knowingly** [**e.g. Jesus** (**as**) **and the angels who know where the objects of intercession lie**].*

Intercession is acceptable but only those who bear witness to the truth may intercede for others. The blessed Verse is about the false belief held by polytheists imagining that idols or others such as angels and Jesus (as) could intercede on their behalf and save them from torment.

The Verse is saying that no one may intercede except those who bore witness to the truth knowingly. The Verse indicates that verbal testimony is insufficient in matters of faith but it must be borne out of knowledge and certitude. It may also allude that interceders solely intercede on behalf of believers in Divine Unity.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 87

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

87. And if you ask polytheists who created them, they will surely say: "Allah." How then do they turn away** [**from God**]**?

Meccan polytheists believed in Allah's creative act, but they were entangled in polytheism regarding Divine Sovereignty, Grace, and intercession and associated gods with Allah in these respects.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) the blessed Verse says:

“O Muhammad (S)! If you ask these polytheists who created them, they will emphatically say that Allah created them.”

“How then do they turn away** [**from God**]**?”

Surprisingly, they, out of their primordial disposition, seriously confess that God is their Creator, but they turn away from him and worship idols and gods and in the mean time ask Him to answer their prayers. Thus, they render themselves inflicted with everlasting torment and destruction.

Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 88 - 89

وَقِيلِهِ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ هَؤُلاءِ قَوْمٌ لا يُؤْمِنُونَ

فَاصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلامٌ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

88. And Our Prophet says: “O Lord! Verily, these are a people who do not believe.
89. [***Now that you have lost your hope to guide them to the Straight Path***] ***then turn away from them and say: “Peace*** [***unto you***]***! But they will come to know*** [***what their recompense shall be***].

Qilihi like qawlihi is an infinitive denoting “to say.” Confronting obdurate people, prophets seek refuge with God. They are asked to leave obdurate polytheists alone rather than enter into disputation with them lest they happen to be defeated.

The blessed Verses in question reveal the Noble Prophet’s (S) complaint against the obdurate and insensible people. The Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) complains that he talked to them day and night and made attempts at bearing glad tidings and warnings.

He related the dire fate of the ancient peoples who refrained from believing in Divine Unity. He warned them against Divine Retribution and heartened them that if they turn away from error, they will be rewarded by Divine Bounties.

In short, he did his level best to guide them to the Straight Path of the Islamic faith, but they were not affected by his words and they failed to believe in God. Now God knows best as what to do with them.

The last Verse includes Divine Injunction to His Prophet (S) to leave them alone. He is reminded that turning away from them does not entail refusing to talk to them, violence, and aggression.

He is asked to say unto them:

“Peace [***unto you***]***!”***

The gentle word connotes neither friendship nor greeting, but it indicates separation and alienation.

It resembles the gentle words mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an:

"And when the foolish address them with bad words, they reply back with mild words of gentleness"[8].

The word peace ad hoc indicates indifference accompanied with dignity. In the mean time, he warns them with a meaningful sentence lest they imagine that the separation and farewell indicate that God has nothing to do with them.

The Verse closes with the clause:

"But they will come to know."

O Lord! Make our bonds with thee and your saints firmer day by day so that they may intercede on our behalf.

O Lord! Protect us from any kind of manifest and latent polytheism. Amen O Lord of the world!

1. Ruh al-Bayan [Exegesis], vol. 25, p. 89.
2. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Exegesis, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol.4, p. 612.
3. 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Exegesis, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 612.
4. Nahj al-Balagha.
5. Maraghi's Exegesis.
6. 23:10-11
7. Ruh al-Bayan Exegesis, vol. 8, p. 392.
8. 25:63

Surah al-Dukhan, Chapter 44, Verses 1 - 36

(The Smoke)
Section (juz' 25)
Number of Verses: 59

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Chapter in question revealed in Mecca has fifty nine Verses. It is the fifth Chapter beginning with the detached letters HM.

The word:

dukhan (***"smoke"***)

it attested twice in the Holy Qur'an. One instance is to be found in Chapter 41[1] concerning the beginning of this world and the other which may be found in the tenth Verse of the Chapter in question, makes a reference to the end of the world.

Most of the issues mentioned in the Chapter concern the Greatness of the Qur'an; it Revelation on the Night of Decree; Unity; disbelievers' fate; the story of prophet Moses (as), Children of Israel, and Pharaoh; uselfulness of creation; and the creation of the heavens and the earth.

Merits of the Recitation of the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition:

"One who recites Surah al-Dukhan on Friday in the day and at night, God will have a mansion built for him in Paradise."[2]

Another Prophetic tradition says:

"One who recites Surah al-Dukhan in one night, he will awaken when seventy thousand angels ask for his forgiveness."[3]

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 1 – 3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

حم

وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنْذِرِينَ

1. HM

2. By the manifest Book that makes things clear.

3. We sent It down on a blessed night. Indeed, We are ever warning.

The word ***"blessed"*** (***mubarak***) refers to the Night of Decree (laylat al-qadr) which is in the blessed month of Ramadan [the ninth month of the lunar calendar]:

(***"The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was sent down"***).

Different interpretations have been put forward for the detached letters opening a number of Qur'anic Chapters the best of which may be the one according to which the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an springs from the same letters as the second Verse of Chapter 42[4], following the detached letters HM 'ASQ, reads:

"Likewise Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise sends Revelation to you [***O Muhammad!***].***"***

according to a number of traditions, a secret lies in these letters which is solely known to God.[5]

The detached letters HM open the Verse in question as well as the four preceding and the two following Chapters. Interpretations of these letters have been discussed above. Such interpretations of the detached letters HM may be found in the openings of Chapters 40 and 41[6].

It is worthy of note that a number of exegets have taken HM in the sense of taking an oath consistent with the following oath to the Qur'an thus making two oaths to the detached letters HM and the Qur'an.

It was mentioned above that God Almighty swears to the Holy Qur'an in the second Verse of this Chapter saying:

"By the manifest Book that makes things clear."

The Holy Qur'an is a Book with manifest contents, invigorating teachings, constructive decrees, and well measured plans. It bears testimony to Its Truth.

"The Sun bears testimony to [*the existence of*] *the Sun."*

The truth for which the oath has been taken is suggested in the third Verse:

"We sent It [***i.e., the Holy Qur'an bearing testimony to the veracity of the prophethood of the Prophet of Islam*** (***S***)] ***down on a blessed night."***

The word:

mubarak (***"blessed; useful; everlasting; permanent"***)

derives from baraka.

What night is the one which is the source of permanent good things? The majority of exegets maintain that it is the Night of Decree, a blessed Night on which the Ordainments of the world of humanity found a novel color with the Revelation of the Holy Qur'an, a night on which the fates of humanity and the Ordainments of one year are predestined.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an was revealed to the pure heart of the Prophet (S) on a fateful and momentous night. It is noteworthy that the Verse apparently indicates that the Holy Qur'an, in Its entirety, was revealed to the Prophet (S) on the Night of Decree.

What was the main purpose behind Its revelation?

It is mentioned in the same Verse:

"Indeed, We are ever warning."

God Almighty appoints His Messengers to warn polytheists and wrong doers and the prophethood of the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) with this manifest Book is the last link of the chain of prophethood.

It is true that prophets warned on the one hand and bore glad tidings on the other, but their calls basically rested on giving warnings to wrong doers and sinners.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 4 - 6

فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ حَكِيمٍ

أَمْراً مِنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ

رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ

4. Therein [the blessed night] is decreed [and explicated] every [momentous] matter of Ordainments [as per Divine Wisdom].
5. As a Command [the Revelation of the Qur'an on the Night of Decree and the Decree of every matter on that night] from Us. Indeed, We are ever sending [all the Messengers].
6. [Revelation of the Book and sending Messengers is] a Mercy from your Lord. Indeed, He is the All-Hearer, the Omniscient.

The Night of Decree is recurrent each and every year. The present tense of the verb indicates progression. The Ordainments of the Night of Decree concern basic issues. The Night of Decree is the fateful and momentous night.

The blessed Verse provides a description of the Night of Decree

***"Therein** [**the blessed night**] **is decreed** [**and explicated**] **every** [**momentous**] **matter of Ordainments** [**as per Divine Wisdom**]."*
***"Is decreed"** (**yufraqu**)*

makes a reference to the Ordainment of all fateful and momentous matters on that night.

The employment of the word:

***"All-Wise"** (**hakim**)*

demonstrates the wisdom and unchangeability of Divine Ordainment. The attribute is usually used in the Holy Qur'an for God but its employment for things other than God is for the sake of emphasis.

The exposition is in harmony with many a tradition to the effect that the Ordainments of all humanity, e.g. provisions and longevity, within a period of one year are ordained on the Night of Decree. The exposition of the issue and other discussions on the Night of Decree and the harmony of Divine Ordainment with human free will are to found in the exegesis of Chapter 97[7].

Emphasis is laid on the Divine Revelation of the Qur'an in Verse five:

***"As a Command** [**the Revelation of the Qur'an on the Night of Decree and the Decree of every matter on that night**] **from Us. Indeed, We are ever sending** [**all the Messengers**]."*

Basic grounds for the revelation of the Qur'an, sending the prophets, and the Ordainments of the Night of Decree are mentioned in the third Verse:

"A Mercy from your Lord."

His infinite Mercy necessitates that he does not abandon His servants but send them plans and guides in order to guide them on the winding path of perfection toward God. All the world of existence is basically emanated from his infinite Mercy and humanity enjoys His Mercy more than other creatures.

Seven Divine Attributes are enumerated in the Verse and the following Ones all of which indicate His Unity.

These Attributes include:

***"All-Hearing** (**His servants' invocations**) **and Omniscient** (**of the secrets of His servants' hearts**)."*

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 7 - 8

رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُوقِنِينَ

لا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ آبَائِكُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

7. The Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, if you have a faith with certainty.
8. There is no god but He. It is He Who gives life and causes death – your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.

Let us give careful consideration to the Holy Qur'an revealed by the Lord of heavens, the earth, and all creatures. Careful consideration of creation and guidance on the path of perfection paves the way for acquiring certitude.

Three Divine Attributes are mentioned in these two Verses: firstly, Divine Lordship (rububiyya) describing Himself as the Lord and nurturer of creatures, i.e., the heaven, the earth and what exists between the twain.

Secondly, Divine Lordship, the Everlasting Lord and Creator of all material and immaterial creatures unassociated in His Sovereignty and Creation with any existent being. Thirdly, His Oneness in His Deeds the highest of which is to give life and cause death, i.e., He gives life to the dead and thereafter causes death.

With due consideration to the fact that in these Verses, one is supposed to reason a posteriori, the unity and movement of creatures evidently substantiates proving the Necessary Being (wajib al-wujud), God Almighty, the Creator of the world Who usually describes Himself in this Verse and many other Verses as the Creator of the heaven and the earth.

Thus, taking into consideration the admirable system of creation and the marvelous palace of this world, one may, to some extent, learn the secrets of creation and notice that there is a secret concealed in each and every atom of creatures,

"if you split the heart of each atom, you will find a sun shining within it."

Thus, one may attain to certitude regarding the existence of the All-Wise and Omnipotent Originator.

Through careful consideration of the systematicity and unity of the world, it will be known that all creatures function as the links of a chain under the Command of the All-Wise God and will acknowledge His Unity, i.e., there is no creator but:

"He Who gives life and causes death – your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers."

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 9 - 11

بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ يَلْعَبُونَ

فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُبِينٍ

يَغْشَى النَّاسَ هَذَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

9. [*Disbelievers do not believe in it.*] ***Nay!*** ***They play about*** [***with truths***] ***in*** [***unfathomable***] ***doubt.***
10. Then await you the Day when the sky will bring forth a visible smoke.
11. Covering [***all***] ***the people: this is an excruciating torment.***

Both attestations of the word fa-'rtaqib in the Holy Qur'an are to be found in this Chapter. The word is a warning to disbelievers and a consolation to the Prophet (S).

There is neither complication nor any ambiguity in the arguments produced for Divine Unity and disbelievers doubts spring from their innermost grudge and animosity;

(***"But they play in their doubt in vain"***).

The blessed Verse says that disbelievers are in doubt regarding what God Almighty imparted to them through prophets assuming that mundane life and possession are permanent, since they are preoccupied with mundane affairs and pass their time in sport until they become entangled with torment and they are rendered desperate.

According to the Verse, disbelievers pretend ignorance so that they spend their time in mere play and show unto others that the words of the Noble Prophet (S) are baseless; however any wise individual, thanks to his intellection, perceives that such marvelous systematicity requires the creation of the Omniscient and Omnipotent Creator.

It is so unfortunate that the wise man perceives the facts but pretends ignorance and through his pretence and denial deserves torment.

Had he been unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, he would not have deserved torment.

According to the second and third Verses, following an exposition of His Lordship, Godhead, and Creation He warns disbelievers against their chastisement by Him and addressing his Messenger He says O Muhammad (S) against disbelievers' hostility and animosity await the day on which the recompense of their deeds will be sent down from the heaven as a consequence of their disobedience.

On such day, a visible smoke will embrace people and that will be an excruciating torment.

The Exegets' Views Regarding the Verse in Question

By smoke famine is intended. As narrated on the authority of 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, when the people of Quraysh did not believe in the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (S) but made many an attempt to harm him, the Noble Prophet (S) cursed the tribe of Banu Nadr and they were afflicted by famine for seven years such that they had to feed on carcass and bones.

There was no rain and there was so much dust in the air that they, out of hunger, saw smoke in the sky.

Such dire situation made Abu Sufyan to go to the Noble Prophet (S) and say unto him:

"You enjoined us to care for our kith and kin and your blood relatives are dying of starvation. They have taken an oath that if you invoke God to remove the torment, they will believe in your prophethood."

As a consequence, their supplication

(***"O God! Remove the torment since we are believers"***)

is narrated in the Holy Qur'an. Upon the removal of the torment, they persisted in their disbelief.[8]

The smoke in question is a reference to the dust in the air resembling smoke on the day of the conquest of Mecca.

It refers to the day before the Resurrection Day and the disintegration of the world. According to the Prophet (S), early signs of Resurrection are the smoke, the descent of Jesus (as), and the fire erupting from the depth of the town of Aden driving all people to the gathering place of Resurrection.

Hudhayfa inquired:

"O Messenger of God (S)! What kind of fire is that?"

In reply, the Noble Prophet (S) recited the same Verse saying that:

"The smoke will embrace the East and the West and will last for forty days and nights. On that day, the believer will be like someone who has a cold and the disbeliever will resemble a drunk."

A similar narration is transmitted from Imam 'Ali (as).[9] Taking into consideration the last tradition, the third explanation seems preferable since according to which God Almighty warns disbelievers against the signs appearing before the Resurrection Day.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 12 - 13

رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ إِنَّا مُؤْمِنُونَ

أَنَّى لَهُمُ الذِّكْرَى وَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مُبِينٌ

12. [***People will say***]***: "Our Lord! Remove the torment from us, really we shall believe!"***
13. How can there be for them an admonition when a Messenger explaining things clearly has already come to them [***though they ignored them***]***.***

Those who have taken religion as a mere play will notice their neglect and doubt one day. They will offer their supplications since Divine Wrath follows sending the last guidance and there will be no avail in repentance after being afflicted with torment.

Consequently, the two blessed Verses say that when disbelievers notice the tokens of torment and the approach of the Resurrection Day, they will regret their past evil deeds and say that they believe but their repentance will be of no avail since the torment will approach them and what exists in them potentially will be actualized. When the Messenger and Divine Guidance (S) called them to believe in God, they turned away from him and lost the opportunity to act and save themselves.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 14 - 16

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوا مُعَلَّمٌ مَجْنُونٌ

إِنَّا كَاشِفُو الْعَذَابِ قَلِيلاً إِنَّكُمْ عَائِدُونَ

يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرَى إِنَّا مُنْتَقِمُونَ

14. Then they had turned away from him and said: "[***He is***] ***one taught*** [***by someone***]***, a man possessed!"***
15. Indeed, We shall remove the torment for a while. Indeed you will return [***to disbelief***]***.***
16. On the Day when We shall seize you with the greatest seizure. Indeed, We will exact retribution.

Divine Retribution will not be exacted for gratification of His thirst for revenge, rather it will be exacted for administration of justice.

The word ***batsh*** is employed in the sense of "seize with awe, severity, and greatness." Some have taken the word in the sense of defeating polytheists in the battle of Badr. God Almighty is the source of Mercy; however at times, He is Wrathful. Those who take Divine Revelation as mere play shall suffer severely from Divine Wrath.

God Almighty shall exact retribution of disbelievers who called the Prophet (S)

"taught [by someone], a man possessed."

Instead of believing in his prophethood and Divine Unity wholeheartedly, they turned away from him and said that:

"he was taught by someone and he was a man possessed [by evil spirits]."

They said at times that "a Roman slave" had heard the legends of the prophets and he taught him such legends. At times they also claimed that his words spring from his mental imbalance.

Verse 15 reads:

"Indeed, We shall remove the torment for a while. Indeed you will return [to disbelief]."

It is thus evident that regretting one's deeds when afflicted with torment is of no avail since their decision as to the revision of their deeds is transient and when disasters subside, they proceed with their previous stratagems.

Verse 16 reads:

"On the Day when We shall seize you with the greatest seizure. Indeed, We will exact retribution."

The word batsh denotes seizing by force and it ad hoc designates seizing for severe chastisement and the adjective:

kubra ("great, severe")

modifying batsha indicates the harsh and severe chastisement in store for disbelievers and polytheists.

In short, subsiding and removal of their ad hoc chastisement will be of no avail since the harsh and final chastisement is inevitably in store for them. Muntaqimun is from intiqam indicating, as mentioned above, chastisement, though the latter is used in common usage in the sense of revenge which is accompanied by anger and hatred.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 17 - 19

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَجَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ كَرِيمٌ

أَنْ أَدُّوا إِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ رَسُولٌ أَمِينٌ

وَأَنْ لا تَعْلُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي آتِيكُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ

17. And verily We tried before them Pharaoh's people when there came to them a noble Messenger.
18. Saying [***Moses unto the Children of Israel***]***: "Deliver to me Allah's servants*** [***so that I may set them free and save them from exploitation***]. ***Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy Messenger."***
19. "And exalt not yourselves against Allah. Truly, I have come unto you with a manifest authority."

Divine trial is an inevitable and long standing tradition. God Almighty tries humanity through sending prophets so that those acknowledging the Truth and those persisting in their obstinate denial could be distinguished:

(***"And verily We tried"***).

Proceeding with the topic of the foregoing Verses as to the disobedience of Arab polytheists' and well as ancient people's disobedience against the Truth, the Verses in question make mention of their excruciating torment and utter defeat so that they may serve as a consolation for believers and a warning against hateful disbelievers.

Mention is made of the story of Moses and Pharaoh:

"And verily We tried before them Pharaoh's people when there came to them a noble Messenger."

Fatanna is taken from fitna which is originally employed in the sense of placing gold ore in crucible to refine it from impurities. It is figuratively used in the sense of any test or trial conducted to determine the sincerity of human beings. The world is the scene of the trial of humanity throughout their lifespan.

The people of Pharaoh enjoyed a powerful state,abundant possessions, and extraordinary resources and opportunities which contributed to their living at the zenith of power; however, such power led to their vanity and they were entangled with all kinds of sin and wrong doing.

"There came to them a noble Messenger"

at that time. The Messenger was noble (karim) in terms of his high esteem and magnanimity in the presence of God and in respect to his noble descent. The Messenger was Moses(as) son of 'Imran (as).

In Verse 18, Moses (as) addressed the Children of Israel politely and lovingly:

"The purpose of sending me to you is that you, as Allah's servants, believe in me as His Messenger, and deliver to me what has been commanded to you."

According to this exegesis,

“Allah’s servants”

is addressed to the people of Pharaoh, though this Qur’anic expression is used for God’s righteous servants, it is employed for disbelievers and sinners in order to console them and also attract them to believe in Truth. Therefore, ***“deliver”*** (***addu***) indicates obeying Divine Command and acting upon His Injunctions.

Some exegets have presented another interpretation for the sentence maintaining that

“Allah’s servants” (***‘ibad Allah***)

indicates the Children of Israel and:

“deliver” (***addu***)

means leave them to Moses (as) so that he may set them free from bondage. Mention is made of the point in Verse 17 of Chapter 26;[10]

“Therefore, allow the Children of Israel to go with us.”[11]

To reject any false accusation he says:

“Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy Messenger.”

Thus, in various Qur’anic Verses, he rejects the false accusations of the people of Pharaoh, e.g. sorcery, aiming at superiority and ruling the land of Egypt, driving Egyptians out of their land.

According to Verse 19, following calling them to obey God through liberating the Children of Israel, Moses (as) says:

“And exalt not yourselves against Allah. Truly, I have come unto you with a manifest authority.”

By manifest authority, he means clear miracles and obvious and logical arguments.

By

“exalt not yourselves against Allah”

any deed inconsistent with total submission to Divine Will is intended which may range from opposition and disobedience to harming and hurting God’s Messengers to claims to divinity, divine sovereignty and the like.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 20 - 22

وَإِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ أَنْ تَرْجُمُونِ

وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا لِي فَاعْتَزِلُونِ

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنَّ هَٰؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ مُجْرِمُونَ

20. "And truly I seek refuge with my Lord and your Lord lest you should accuse* [*or stone*] *me.
21. "But if you believe me not* (*at least*) *keep away from me and leave me alone.
22. Then* [*when he lost his hope in his Call being acknowledged by them*] *called upon his Lord* [*saying*]*: "These are indeed the people who are sinners."

Opposition against prophets and exploiting people are on a par with making attempts at being superior to God Almighty.

Moses (as) addressed his opponents who exploited people and said:

"And exalt not yourselves against Allah."

When sin and corruption find their way into man's heart, the prophets' Call will be of no avail;

(*"These are indeed the people who are sinners"*).

According to the blessed Verse, when Moses (as) insisted on guiding them to the true path and worked miracles to show unto them his superiority over them, the people of pharaoh, intending to kill him, tried to stone the noble prophet (as).

Upon being threatened to execution, he said that he sought refuge to his Lord and their Lord, thus trying to say unto them that their Lord was the same and that he called them to believe in the One God Who created all creatures and they would all return to Him, but Pharaoh was a weak creature unworthy of being worshipped.

In Verse 22, Moses (as) says

"if you believe not in me who am the Messenger of God, why do you intend to kill me. Leave me on my own, i.e., I have my duty of trying to guide you to the true path but if you do not acknowledge my Call, keep distance from me."

When Moses (as) lost his hope in guiding Pharaoh and the Copts to the true path he cursed them at

Divine Command;

(*“Then* [*he*] *called upon his Lord”*).

It is mentioned in Verse 22 that Moses called upon his Lord saying:

“O my Lord! These are disobedient and sinners, so immersed in sin and disobedience and their hearts are so darkened that there is no hope for them to come to the true path.”

Being immersed in sins and pleasures of the flesh keeps man far from God such that even his primordial nature (fitra) may not save him.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 23 - 24

فَأَسْرِ بِعِبَادِي لَيْلاً إِنَّكُمْ مُتَّبَعُونَ

وَاتْرُكِ الْبَحْرَ رَهْواً إِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُغْرَقُونَ

23. [***We said unto him:***] ***“Depart you with My servants by night***[12]***. Surely you will be pursued*** [***the people of Pharaoh***]***.”***
24. “And traverse the sea[13] [***and expect nothing since following your passage water will fill up the gap***] ***since they are to be drowned.”***

The nightly flight of the Children of Israel led by Moses (as) was a kind of velvet coup unbearable to Pharaoh hence dispatching a host to pursue them. The Verse implies that if you cannot attain to your goals in a land of disbelief emigrate from it and know that God bestows security and peace to his friends.

According to Verses 23 and 24, Moses’ (as) prayer was answered and he was asked to depart from Egypt at night with his followers from among the Children of Israel. God let him know that following their flight, the people of Pharaoh would pursue you.

He commanded Moses (as) to strike the Nile with his stick and it would be cleaved so that they may traverse it safely, but he had to leave it as it was and entertain no worries since it had been ordained that Pharaoh and his host, i.e., the Copts, be drowned in it.

Upon hearing the intelligence that Moses (as) and the Children of Israel departed from the city, he pursued them with his host and saw that the Nile was cloven asunder and learned that it was Moses’ miracle, but because of is vanity and arrogance he thought that he could traverse the Nile on their heels; however, when they reached half way, the cleft collapsed and they were all drowned.

All creatures are the Divine Host totally under His Command. They are the friends of God’s friends and

the enemies of His enemies. They await the Call to take vengeance upon His enemies and cause their destruction.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 25 - 28

كَمْ تَرَكُوا مِنْ جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ

وَزُرُوعٍ وَمَقَامٍ كَرِيمٍ

وَنَعْمَةٍ كَانُوا فِيهَا فَاكِهِينَ

كَذَلِكَ وَأَوْرَثْنَاهَا قَوْماً آخَرِينَ

25. How many of gardens and springs that they left behind.
26. And green crops and excellent places.
27. And comforts of life wherein they used to take delight!
28. Thus [We took them all from them] and We made other people inherit them.

Mundane possessions may not save man from Divine Wrath. Many a time, God Almighty caused the destruction of a wrong doing people and made another people inherit the kingdom of their predecessors.

(***"Thus We made other people inherit them"***).

In the last four Verses God Almighty lets know His Messenger that Pharaoh drowned together with his host and lost many a garden, excellent construction, and fountains because of their disobedience.

Many a field and excellent royal palace were inherited by others, i.e., the Children of Israel and the land of Egypt with so many bounties were inherited by them without toil and hardship because of their faith. It needs to be said that believers, besides the heavenly palaces reserved for them, they will inherit those of disbelievers.

The heavenly degrees of believers are attested in the Holy Qur'an;

"They are the inheritors who inherit Paradise."

The Verse is an admonition and a reminder to believers to think about the manner in which Pharaoh and his people caused their destruction because of their disobedience against the Messenger of God and as a consequence of which were drowned in the torment of this world and the Hereafter, the latter of the

two is more severe and excruciating.

Thus, the Children of Israel, through their faith in God and His Messenger, attained to such sovereignty without any hardship. Such sovereignty was their Divine Bounty in this world. Surely, their Bounties in the Hereafter will be infinite.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 29

فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْظَرِينَ

29. And the heavens and the earth wept not for them, nor were they given a respite.

All creation is harmonious through Divine will. Giving respites to man has certain prerequisites but at times man is so immersed in sin that he will not be given a respite;

(***"nor were they given a respite"***).

The blessed Verse is saying that neither the heaven nor the earth wept for the drowning of Pharaoh and the Copts.

It indicates his lawlessness despite his false claims to superiority and worthiness of being worshipped; however, he had neither dignity nor honor with the inhabitants of the heaven so that his death may cause them to grieve let alone enjoying any station in the eye of the inhabitants of the earth.

He falsely claimed that he was god, but the inhabitants of both the heaven and the earth are the friends of God's friends and the enemies of God's enemies. His perdition gladdened all the creatures of the heaven and the earth since he had led people astray.

Some exegets also maintain that by:

"the heaven and the earth"

their inhabitants are being meant since they only weep for believers and the Close Ones (muqarrabin) rather than for wrong doers like the people of Pharaoh. Some also hold that the weeping of the heaven and the earth is real and is reflected by a specific reddening and change besides the permanent reddening at the times of sunrise and sunset.

According to a tradition,

"When Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) was martyred, the heaven wept for him and the weeping was reflected in the corners of the sky."[14]

According to another tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as)

“The heaven wept for Yahya ibn Zakariyya (who was martyred by the tyrant ruler of his time very deplorably) and Husayn ibn ‘Ali (as) for forty days and did not weep for anyone else except for the two.”

The narrator inquired:

“How was the weeping of the heaven?”

He replied:

“An unusual reddening appeared in the sky at sunrise and sunset.”[15]

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 30 - 31

وَلَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرائيلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِينِ

مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَالِياً مِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ

30. And verily We saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment:
31. From Pharaoh** [**’s torment**]**; indeed he was arrogant and was from amongst transgressors beyond bounds.

Historical developments are all within Divine Control; however, it is to be noted that man’s perdition lies in his disposition and conduct.

These two Verses are addressed to the Children of Israel saying:

“We drowned Pharaoh and saved the Children of Israel from the torments inflicted by Pharaoh and the Copts who had held them in servitude and humility and killed their sons and forced their women to work for them.”

“From Pharaoh”

is a metaphorical expression denoting torment, i.e., We liberated the Children of Israel from Pharaoh’s torment.

“Indeed he was arrogant and was from amongst transgressors beyond bounds”

makes a reference to Pharaoh’s disobedience, disbelief, arrogance, and rebellion that transgressed beyond bounds such that he falsely claimed divinity.

As a consequence of his transgression and oppressing God’s servants, he suffered Divine Wrath and was drowned in the Nile. That is the chastisement of one in this world and the Hereafter who steps

beyond limits, does not obey God, and does wrong to his inferiors.

Surah al-Dukhan – Verses 32 – 33

وَلَقَدِ اخْتَرْنَاهُمْ عَلَى عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ مَا فِيهِ بَلَاءٌ مُبِينٌ

32. And We chose them** [**the Children of Israel**] **above mankind and jinn** [**during the time of Moses** (**as**)] **because of knowledge.
***33. And granted them signs in which there was a plain trial** [**though it was of no avail**].*

God's Ordainments are based on His Omnipotence. He tests His servants by the mundane possessions bestowed them. According to these two blessed Verses, He bestowed merit and dignity to the Children of Israel since He knew that they deserved them.

God Almighty bestowed to the Children of Israel from the Signs of His Omnipotence and many a miracle attested in Qur'anic Verses, e.g. cleaving the sea asunder and the clouds casting their shadows on them (and manna and salwa) at the time of their hardship in the desert.

Such miracles served as tests for them demonstrating that they had to be grateful and patient in afflictions. The Verse indicates that abundance of bounties is a test for them when they are vanquished by Satan to be preoccupied by the pleasures of the flesh.

The wise are not arrogant in such instances noticing that mundane bounties are transient and they are being tested by them. Such individuals know that they are supposed to enjoy the bounties in the best way in order to obtain Divine Satisfaction. They are expected to be grateful since according to the Holy Qur'an:

***"If you give thanks I will give you more, but if you are thankless, indeed My chastisement is severe"**[16].*

Surah al-Dukhan – Verses 34 – 36

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ لَيَقُولُونَ

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْأُولَى وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُنْشَرِينَ

فَأْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

34. Indeed these* [*polytheists*] *are* [*always*] *saying:
35. "There is nothing but our first death and we will not be resurrected."
36. "Then bring back our* [*deceased*] *forefathers if you* [*prophets*] *speak the truth.

Belief in Resurrection draws a distinction between faith in Divine Unity and polytheism.

It is worthy of note that polytheists believed in God but did not acknowledge Resurrection:

(***"we will not be resurrected"***).

According to these three blessed Verses, the Quraysh in reply to believers who said unto them that they would be resurrected after death:

(***"Seeing that you were dead and He gave you life. Then He will give you death then again will bring you to life* [*on the Day of Resurrection*]*"***).

However they were too ignorant or pretended ignorance to acknowledge Resurrection. Any wise person may perceive that the world and its systematicity it not in vain but they bear abundant fruits. All prophets let humanity know that the Hereafter awaits them and their sayings as well as Divine Guidance bear witness to the truth of their words to the effect that whatever is sown in this life will be reaped in the world to come.

There remains no room for any doubt concerning Resurrection until the dead will be raised to let them know that there is an afterlife and they will be recompensed for their deeds.

In reply to believers who aimed to let them know of the Day of Judgment they said that if they were in the right their forefathers could be raised to inform them of the Judgment so that they could acknowledge the veracity of believers' claims.

However, such ignorant people did not know that the advent of Resurrection would be at the end of this world since it is parallel with this world rather than beginning at the expiry of the mundane world.

It is reported that Abu Jahl asked the Noble Prophet (S) to give life to their forefather, Qusayy ibn Kilab, so that we could ask him about the Hereafter since he was a truthful man and we may believe you upon his acknowledgement.

1. Surah Fussilat
2. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, the opening of Surah al-Dukhan (Chapter 44).
3. Ibid.
4. Surah al-Shura
5. Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 1, p. 30.
6. Surah al-Ghafir and Surah Fussilat

7. Surah al-Qadr
8. Burhan [Exegesis], vol. 4, p. 160, under the blessed Verse in question.
9. Tafsir al-Safi, vol. 4, p. 405, under the blessed Verse in question.
10. Surah al-Shu'ara
11. See also 7:105; 20:47.
12. Asr is taken from isra' "move from one location to another by night.
13. Rahw means open, quiet, and vast road.
14. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 65, under the Verse in question.
15. Ibid.
16. 14:7

Surah al-Dukhan, Chapter 44, Verses 37- 59

Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 37

أَهُمْ خَيْرٌ أَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ

***37. Are they better** [**in terms of opportunities**] **or the people of Tubba' and those before them? We destroyed them because they were indeed criminals.** [**Why do you not take a lesson?**]*

History provides man with the best lessons. The prosperous land of the Yemen, located in the South of the Arabian Peninsula, was the cradle of a great civilization ruled by kings called Tubba' (the plural form is Tababi'a).

The term literally indicates "those whose orders are followed by people" or "those succeeding each other to rule." The people enjoyed a very powerful state wielding a vast sway.

The blessed Verse, preceded by making mention of Meccan polytheists and their animosity toward the Prophet (S) and their denial of Resurrection, makes a reference to the fate of the sinful and criminal people of Tubba' warns Meccan polytheists against Divine torment in store for them on the Day of Resurrection.

The blessed Verse asks:

"Are they better or the people of Tubba'? We destroyed them because they were indeed criminals."

The people of Hijaz were to some extent aware of the fate of the people of Tubba' as a consequence of which no further details are provided in the following Verses concerning them, but It merely suffices to

warn Meccan polytheists against a fate in store for them similar to that of other peoples inhabiting the regions in Sham [viz. Syria, Palestine, East Jordan, Lebanon, and the northwestern parts of the Fertile Crescent] and Egypt.

Put the case that you deny Resurrection, how could you deny Divine torments sent down on these criminal and disobedient peoples?

"Those before them"

alludes to the peoples of Nuh, 'Ad, Thamud, and the like.

Some exegets maintain that Tubba' was a believer and a truth seeking man and the

"people of Tubba'"

mentioned in the two Qur'anic Verses bear testimony to the same since not the ruler but his people are censured.

According to a prophetic tradition:

"Do not slander Tubba' since he submitted to Divine Will."[1]

A tradition is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) saying:

"Tubba' verily said unto [the tribes of] Aws and Khazraj:

'Stay here until this Prophet proclaims his Call. Had I enjoyed the opportunity to be his contemporary, I would have been at his disposal in his Prophetic Call.'"[2]

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 38 - 39

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لاعِبِينَ

مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لا يَعْلَمُونَ

38. And We created not the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, for merely play.
39. We created them not except with truth, but most of them [polytheists] know not.

The word ***la'b*** is used in the sense of "merely play, anything done in vain," like childish plays. These two blessed Verses serve as a prelude to the following Verses on Resurrection.

It is as if they indicate that if there were no Resurrection, creation would be purposeless, since the world

of existence has been created for man and if man becomes non-existent by death, the world of existence would also be in vain.

It is for the same grounds that God Almighty says:

"We created not the heavens and the earth for merely play, but We created them with truth."

Logical arguments are being produced for proving Resurrection to the effect that any sensible person may use his intellection to perceive that God Almighty created not the heavens and the earth and what is between them in vain but they were created with truth as per Divine Wisdom and Omniscience.

The Verses in question and the following Ones indicate that the purpose behind creating the heavens and the earth is the creation of man and the purpose behind creating man is to raise him up on the Day of Resurrection, or else the creation of the heavens and the earth would be in vain.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 40 - 42

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ مِيقَاتُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

يَوْمَ لا يُغْنِي مَوْلىً عَنْ مَوْلىً شَيْئاً وَلا هُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

40. Indeed the Day Distinction [***between truth and falsehood***] ***is the time appointed for all of them –***
41. The Day when a friend avails not a friend [***of his***] ***in aught and no help can they receive*** [***from any source***]***,***
42. Except him on whom Allah has Mercy. Indeed He is the Omnipotent, the Most Merciful.

Since creation enjoys a true purpose, Resurrection should occur. Since the All-Wise Lord created the world of existence as per truth, He will not abandon His favorite creature following his death. All humanity will gather on the Day of Resurrection, but man will be alone then.

The Day of Distinction (yaw al-fasl), the appointed time when all humanity gather, is one of the appellations of Resurrection, since truth and falsehood will be distinguished on that Day and the wrong doings of wrong doers will be compensated.

The people of truth and falsehood will clearly see their past deeds and their deeds will be recompensed.

According to the latter two Verses no friend may meet the demands of his friend since no one will be able to extend help to his friends unless one will be granted Divine Mercy and Favor, since Glory, Dignity, and Succor will solely belong to Divine Essence.

He is All-Merciful and All-Gracious toward his creatures. He chastises or forgives whomever He Wills. It is needless to say that His chastisement and forgiving are based on Divine Justice and Wisdom and no wrong will be done to anyone.

Since His Mercy surpasses His Wrath, we are all hopeful to enjoy His Mercy and sinners, no matter to what extent they have transgressed the bounds, should not despair of His Mercy.

It is in the Holy Qur'an that:

"Certainly no one despairs of Allah's Mercy, except the people who disbelieve"[3].

The righteous good doing pious should fear God at all times and not be arrogant for their deeds since they may never know whether their deeds are accepted by God. It is reported from Infallible Imams that believers' hope and fear should be like the two pans of the balance.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 43 - 46

إِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّومِ

طَعَامُ الْأَثِيمِ

كَالْمُهْلِ يَغْلِي فِي الْبُطُونِ

كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيمِ

43. Verily, the tree of Zaqqum
44. Will be the food of the sinners.
45. Like boiling oil, it will boil in the bellies.
46. Like the boiling of scalding water.

The word zaqqum indicates a kind of undesirable food served in Hell. Mohl is used in the sense of molten or impure metal or copper. The four Verses concern the torment of sinners, particularly disbelievers.

By

***athim* (*“sinful”*)**

disbelievers may be intended since the preceding Verses were about disbelievers and the general theme of the Verses indicate that one who believes in Divine Unity, Resurrection, the prophethood of the Seal of the Prophets (S), and the imamate of the Infallible Imams (as), even if he happens to be a sinner, he will not be inflicted with such torment.

Based on the above, some exegets maintain that the Verses in question allude to the cursed Abu Jahl who went to the extreme in disbelief, grudge, and animosity against the Prophet (S). It is reported that once Abu Jahl was eating some dates mingled with butter and was saying mockingly that it was the ***Zaqqum*** against which Muhammad warned us and we eat our fill of it.

Rejecting his false claim, God Almighty said that the fruit of the tree of ***Zaqqum*** was the food of sinners rather than what Abu Jahl conceived of it.

Any molten metal, e.g. gold, silver, and copper, is called muhl. Some also hold that by it oil impurities are being meant such that when oil is heated, its impurities settle as sediment or dregs which are also called durdiy al-zit (“oil dregs”).

The fruit of the tree of ***Zaqqum*** boils in bellies in the manner of boiling scalding water cutting up their intestines. The Almighty (jabbar) and All-Subjugating (qahhar) Sovereign addresses the myrmidons, i.e., the angels who thrust the damned into Hell (zabaniya) wrathfully.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 47 - 50

خُذُوهُ فَاعْتِلُوهُ إِلَى سَوَاءِ الْجَحِيمِ

ثُمَّ صُبُّوا فَوْقَ رَأْسِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيمِ

ذُقْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْكَرِيمُ

إِنَّ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَمْتَرُونَ

47. [It will be said] “Seize him and drag him into the midst of blazing Fire,

48. Then pour over his head the torment of boiling water.

49. Taste you [this]! Indeed, you were [were pretending to be] the mighty, the generous.

50. Indeed, this is that whereof you used to doubt!"

The torments of the Resurrection Day are both physical and non-physical. The former include the use of boiling material and the latter include hearing of humiliation and derision saying who you were who falsely claimed to be mighty and generous in your mundane life?

The blessed Verse 47 asks the angels to seize the unbeliever and drag him forcefully into the midst of Hell surrounded by fire.

The next Verse reads:

Then pour over his head boiling water such that ***Zaqqum*** cuts them into pieces inwardly and burns them with it outwardly.

Regarding the third Verse exegest maintain that Abu Jahl would say unto the Messenger of God (S):

"O Muhammad! I enjoy power and I am held in esteem in Mecca but neither you nor your God may ever inflict any harm unto me."

As a consequence of his boastful remarks, he will be held in contempt on the Resurrection Day and it will be said unto him derisively:

"Then taste the torments since you are mighty and you are held in esteem."

Verse 50 reads that when disbelievers taste the torments, it will be said unto them that this is the torment warned against by the prophets but you held them in doubt and slandered them.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 51 - 53

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي مَقَامٍ أَمِينٍ

فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ

يَلْبَسُونَ مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ

51. Verily, the pious will be in place of security.
52. Among gardens and springs.
53. Dressed in fine silk and in thick silk, facing each other.

Sundus and istabraq indicate fine and thick silk fabric respectively. The word hur is the plural form of

huriyya which is used in the sense of women with black eyes and white complexion.

The word *'ayn* the pluralized form of which is 'ayna' indicates "having wide, lovely eyes." The pious are certainly placed in place of security, enjoying the bounties of Paradise and secure from the torments of Hell.

God Almighty says:

***"Verily, the pious will be in the midst of gardens and rivers in a seat of truth, near the Omnipotent King"*[4].**
***"Place of security"*[5]**

and

***"seat of truth"*[6]**

are reserved for those who are ranked third among the pious.

They are the people whose hearts are secure through having faith and their hearts are free from all existent beings besides God. They have struggled against the hosts of estimative, irascible, and concupiscent powers and have succeeded in subjugating them.

They have detached themselves from the attractions of the mundane world and have blocked the way in this world through which powers of darkness used to frequent their hearts; as a consequence of which their hearts are frequented by angels of Mercy. They have stepped out of the abyss of illusions and vain desires so that their hearts have turned into the Threshold of Divine Mercy.

According to a Prophetic tradition,

"The believer's heart is the Threshold of the All-Merciful."

In short, the blessed Verse refers to those whose hearts are secure in this world through faith. They are placed in the place of security. They are secure in their worldly life from concupiscent and satanic desires enjoying the protection of God Almighty. They will also be secure from any affliction in proximity to God in the Hereafter.

The following Verse says that such person derives pleasure from perceiving spiritual and Divine bounties as well those of physical pleasures of Paradise since in the same manner that man is essentially composed of soul and body, his pleasures are to be consistent with his corporeality and spirituality.

The Verse apparently makes a reference to both dimensions since the place of security is consistent with spiritual states attained by human soul upon attainment to perfection. Thus, through perceiving corporeal knowledge, man acquires the knowledge of the spiritual realm of the Hereafter through which he attains to the place of security.

Verse 53 is concerned with the ranks of the corporeal bounties of the pious whose clothes are made in Paradise from sundus and istabraq (fine and thick silk respectively).

Some exegets also maintain that istabraq indicates the carpets prepared for them and the word:

mutaqabilin (***"facing each other"***)

refers to the couches in Paradise facing each other so that they enjoy meeting each other.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 54

كَذَٰلِكَ وَزَوَّجْنَاهُمْ بِحُورٍ عِينٍ

54. Such [***We recompense them***]. ***And We will marry them to fair females with wide, lovely eyes.***

In depicting hur al-'ayn exegets say they are fair females wide, lovely eyes and delicate of complexion. 'Ayn serves as an adjective for the hur of Paradise who are delicate of complexion. Such is the state of the people of Paradise who will enjoy all kinds of bounties and pleasures in Paradise.

Surah al-Dukhan - Verse 55

يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ آمِنِينَ

55. They will call therein for every kind of fruit [***that they wish***] ***in peace and security.***

The greatest bounty is security since the

"place of security"

precedes other bounties. It is worthy of note that security in Paradise is all inclusive. There will be no fear of death, foes, the envious, or perdition.

Peace and security in Paradise concerns the

"place of security"

and the foods

(***"every kind of fruit"***).

Eating some kinds of fruit may at times cause diverse diseases in this world. Piety and fear of God Almighty in this world will lead to peace and security in the Hereafter. The blessed Verse in question

says whatever kind of fruit desired will be available to them without incurring and pain, hardship, or displeasure

(*“in peace and security”*).

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 56 - 57

لا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا الْمَوْتَ إِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْأُولَى وَوَقَاهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

فَضْلاً مِنْ رَبِّكَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

56. They will never taste death therein except the first death [of this world] and He will save them from the torment of the blazing Fire.
57. As a bounty from your Lord! That will be the supreme success!

One who protects himself through piety and fear of God in this world, God will save him from Hell in the Hereafter.

Paradise is everlasting and the people of Paradise will be free from being preoccupied with death. God Almighty owes nothing to anyone rather all blessings are granted through Divine bounteousness (fadl) and all the blessings bestowed upon the people of Paradise are through Divine Favor

(*“as a bounty from your Lord!”*).

According to Verse 56, the highest bounty bestowed upon the people of Paradise is their being admitted to Paradise and the worst torment of the people of Hell is that they will be sent to Hell.

According to a tradition, when the people of Paradise and the people of Hell are settled down in Paradise and Hell respectively, a sheep will be brought to them. It will be said unto them that it is death and the sheep will be killed and it will be said unto the people of Paradise and Hell that it was death, but it no longer exists.

The allegory makes a reference to the absence of death in Resurrection. This world is the world of generation and corruption in which death and life follow each other, i.e., each life is followed by death, each pleasure is followed by displeasure, and health is followed by ailment, since this world is the world of corporeality and potentiality.

It is composed of contradictory constituents and the constituents of any composite entity will disintegrate one day.

That is why death is imminent and inevitable for any entity. Nonetheless, the Hereafter is the permanent

and unchangeable world, since any potentiality in this world will be actualized in the world to come; as a consequence of which, all creatures inclusive of the jinn, humanity, Paradise, Hell, and their constituent elements are neither transient nor subject to disintegration or annihilation.

Another bounty reserved for the pious and the people of Paradise is that they will be secure from the torments of Hell.

Addressing the Messenger of God (S), the blessed Verse says O Muhammad! Saving them from the torments of Hell is a great Bounty, Mercy, and Success from your Lord bestowed upon them. It is a reference to the Divine Succor of faith and piety as bounties granted upon the pious and the God fearing.

The possessive pronoun –ka whose antecedent is the Messenger of God (S) may indicate that the Bounties and Favors bestowed upon the pious springs from their adherence to the Noble Prophet (S), were guided to the true path, worshipped the One God, and adhered to the Infallible Imams (as).

Surah al-Dukhan - Verses 58 - 59

فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَاهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

فَارْتَقِبْ إِنَّهُمْ مُرْتَقِبُونَ

58. Certainly, We have made this [***Qur'an***] ***facile in your tongue so that they may remember.***
59. Await then [***for your triumph***]***; indeed, they are also awaiting*** [***their ominous fate***].

The purpose behind the revelation of the Holy Qur'an is to make people remember that they are God's servants.

The Holy Qur'an is revealed as the last guidance sent down to people saying unto them that if they fail to acknowledge that It is Divine Revelation they should await Divine Wrath.

The last two Verses says unto man that God Almighty sent down the Holy Qur'an in the Arabic tongue in order that upon noticing Its unsurpassed Eloquence and Inimitability, they perceive that it springs from the springhead of Divine Emanation. Thus, they may remember and believe in the prophethood of the Messenger of God (S).

The blessed Verse addresses the Prophet (S) saying

"O Muhammad! Await their being guided to the true path since disbelievers await your fate."

The Verse apparently implies that you await their guidance and felicity where as they await your defeat

and death.

1. Majma' al-Bayan [Exegesis], under the blessed Verse in question.
2. Ibid.
3. 12:87
4. 54:54-55
5. 44:51
6. 54:55
